WHEN SOFT VOICES DIE

By

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Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou are gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Angelique was her name. In the beginning her husband had called her Angel - now he called her Angela.

She stood a golden statue at the bedroom window, watching his car sweep down the palm lined drive and out between the stone gateposts. The MG today, that meant a young girl. She had worked it out eons ago. A tourist who had succumbed to his charms, or obvious wealth, usually rated the Jaguar, and when strictly on business he took the Bentley. The Rolls was reserved for when the two of them, husband and wife, went chauffeur driven to a party or one of the island's cultural events.

Morning sun filtered through the silk-cotton tree on the lawn gilding Angelique, elegant and well-bred as a grayhound, all honey and saffron, the flare of her nostrils the only incongruity to the refinement of her lightly tanned, fine-boned face.

Expressionless, her brown amber flecked eyes watched the car until it disappeared into the valley of banana groves. It would have been nice had he waited long enough to wish her happy birthday.

The thought came unbidden and with an almost imperceptible lift of one eyebrow she quickly dismissed it and him. Looking toward the hills opposite she saw flash a sliver of blue deeper than the sky. That speck of sea reassured her each day that a world still existed beyond the island. She breathed deeply, filling her lungs with air sweetened by woodsmoke and flowers.

The clack of jalousies being opened at other windows came from behind her and the sound of the maid's feet padding mutely across the pinewood floor caused a twinge of annoyance. How often must she tell the servants to wear shoes in the house! With a sigh of exasperation she turned from the window and reached for the stark white envelope, a scar on the rosewood chiffonier she had so far ignored. On the blank face was scrawled carelessly, Happy Birthday Angela. Lifting the flap she drew out a

a check from Leland for five hundred pounds. At least it would provide some amusement for today, and as she planned, a cruel smile shadowed her lips.

"Cara," she said not turning around, her voice soft and deep as wind in the pines of her french homeland.

The padding stopped. "Yes, Mum?"

"I wish for my fawn linen suit, brown scarf and alligator shoes. You understand?"

"Yes, Mum."

Angelique noticed the ironwork table already set for breakfast on the terrace. "And Cara, I will breakfast on the front verandah this morning."

"Yes, Mum."

With a shrug of smooth shoulders Angelique sent her negligee and nightdress whispering to the floor at her feet, then she walked naked to the bathroom, the maid scuttling behind, picking up after her and bringing fresh towels.

The shower pattered like tropical rain over her body and she stood for a long time in the seclusion of rushing water. After towelling herself dry she sat before the mirror and carefully applied make-up to look as though she wore nothing on her face but a breath of pink lipstick. She cared for her body as for a prized and much valued posession, grooming and pampering it not out of vanity and certainly not for Leland. Perhaps it was for Peter, her son, so he would see no change on his annual vacations

home from school in England. In this way she could hold time motionless until his final return. Angelique's eyes slid to the card that leaned against the glass and her face lost its concentration and took on a luminescent tenderness. A picture of one perfect rose wished her many happy returns, and it was signed, "All my love, Peter."

For a moment she looked at it, then at her face in the mirror. The softness remained, making her eyes large and beautiful. Forty years of age today ... As she touched the most delicate of subtle perfumes to the hollow between her breasts she thought how unbelievabley old that sounded. Yet there were another forty to go before she reached the wizened eighty of grandmother when she had died. A long time ... and was it all to be like this, filled with the froth of nothingness? "Une femme évaporée" Grandmother would have called her turning up her sharp Gallic nose in disdain.

What foolishness! Angelique left the mirror. She was the most admired of the socially prominent women on the island. It was her birthday had aroused these traitorous thoughts. That and the fact Peter would be home in a few days. Her heart lurched, longing for release from the chain of hours that still held her apart from her son. A few days. These last were always the hardest to bear.

Turning back to the mirror she satisfied herself that the years had caused little change. Laugh lines she had worried about at twenty-eight had actually disappeared though

she must get after that hint of a frown between her eyes. Deftly she tweezed a hair from one eyebrow then, inspecting her perfectly manicured hands, wondered if she should take time to have them done today. No, thursday would do.

The dangerous moment was past and she was again safe within the cold veneer of her perfection.

With quick sure strokes she brushed her wheat-colored hair sleekly back and folded it into a gleaming knot which she fastened with a tortoishell comb. A workman sang somewhere outside and she heard the clink of crockery as her breakfast was removed from the terrace. For a moment she almost called to reverse her order but then she remembered why she had given it. Her husband's secretary would pass the verandah on her way to the office and she wanted to catch the girl before she started work. The small anticipatory smile returned for a moment then fled, leaving her face serene as she dressed and made sure everything about her was impeccable before she left the sunwashed brightness of her room.

Brougham Hall was one of the oldest Great Houses on the island and through generations of owners it had presided over its rich lands with an air of haughty self-satisfaction. When Colonel Leland Brougham IV bought it, having been forced to terminate an army career due to war wounds, its Georgian aloofness and sense of importance had suited him and he had immediately changed its name

from Hopewell Hall to his own and flung himself into command, ruling the native workers as he had his men in the army.

Angelique, helped by the knowlegeable advice of their obliging neighbor Mr. Landy, had enjoyed searching out antiques and quality pieces with which to furnish it. This enthusiasm even overcame her queasiness at seeing the green bug-infested water in the catchment tank which, strained and boiled for drinking, provided all their water.

But when the buying was done the house she was ready to love had been taken from her by servants and custom that allowed her no physical part in caring for it. Throughout her childhood in France Angelique had always been conscious of her mother's devotion by the willing work that gentle woman had done for her family, and she had felt the need to care for her own young husband in the same way. She had tried, had fought to overturn the island's unwritten laws, but a new unknown Leland had flown into a rage whenever he caught her doing "servant's work" and she had wept with frustration and despair. "What can I do?" she had once cried, "I must do something!" "Be a lady so I can be proud of you," he had replied and left her staring after him, dumb with misery.

Pride had rescued her, taught her to stop caring, made all her attention turn onto herself so she could be hurt no more. She ruled the servants with a sharp tongue,

gaining back the respect she had lost by not behaving as they expected of a white woman, and all her love was focused on the baby who soon arrived and who through the years she was to see so seldom.

Now, almost two decades later, her heels tapped authoritatively on the glossy mahogany floor as she entered the high raftered drawing room with its smell of old wood, mildew and furniture polish. She ran a finger over the jacobean table as he passed, thinking that the new housemaid was doing quite well considering the girl was right out of the bush.

From his place in front of the cold fireplace a great dane rose from the Kezak rug and his unabashed joy at seeing her made Angelique's heart skip. She put a hand on either side of the dog's big head and looked into his eyes. "Do you wish me a happy birthday, Hero?" she whispered, and together they went outside to the white wicker table and chairs. Hero lay beside Angelique as she ate. A cool breeze played with the edges of the lace table cloth. A hummingbird darted and hung between roses that climbed up the verandah and along its edge. In the distance a tractor roared and a donkey brayed from up the hill.

As the maid poured coffee Angelique said, "Naomi, why is it that you wear two aprons? Is one not enough?"

"Keeps my skirt clean all 'round, Mum."

Angelique looked at the guileless black face, then

the bulging stomach. "You are pregnant again. no?"

"Yes, Mum." The tiny woman, pigtails standing at tortured attention all over her head, beamed proudly.

"Who is the father this time, Naomi?"

"I not know, Mum. You wish more toast, Mum?"

"No, that is all." Whatever happened to all these children who kept coming? The maid already had three that Angelique knew of and worked here from sunup till after dinner at night - sometimes ten o'clock. Amazing she found time to meet the fathers, let alone conceive. "And Naomi, only one apron in future."

"Yes, Mum."

Peter would laugh, he found the maids amusing not aggravating as she did. Angelique paused with the coffee cup against her lip, letting the steam finger her face and mist her eyes. Peter ... he'd be seventeen now. How long it was, this necessary separation for school. It seemed her whole life existed for summer vacations. Sometimes thought of how much of his growing up she missed panicked her and she had to force it out of her mind, but he'd soon be here - just five more days.

"Miss Martin!" She'd almost missed the passing secretary. "A moment please."

The girl came to the foot of the steps and looked up, a blush creeping across her angular cheeks, veiling her expression and seeming to concentrate around the pimple

on her chin.

"Good morning, Mrs. Brougham."

Angelique placed marmaleade neatly on a corner of toast. took it into her mouth, chewed slowly, then touched her lips with a linen napkin before turning again to the waiting girl. "I wish you to drive me to Royaltown today at ten. We will take the station wagon to carry birdseed." She rang the silver bell at her elbow, "More bacon, Naomi," she called.

"Mrs. Brougham?"

Angelique turned, eyebrows raised as though suprised to find the secretary still there. "Something is not plain, Miss Martin?"

"Colonel Brougham gave me some letters to type ..." The voice faded and a hand went to the pimple.

"They will wait."

"Yes, Mrs. Brougham."

Over the rim of her cup Angelique watched Miss Martin start back up the hill toward the garages. All these thick ankled English girls Leland hired one after another since firing his first male secretary were so alike she could scarcely tell the difference between them. She supposed they all rushed to the exotic Carribean in search of adventure and romance. Was her husband quite the romance they had expected? Rich enough to dazzle a girl from a council house in Wapping anyway. When the first had arrived Angelique thought they might be friends but Leland had

moved in quickly and she had retreated to watch and display amusement at the blushes and embarrassed eyes of the girls when they met her. She made it plain they were of no consequence, just toys for her wealthy husband to play with until he wearied of them. But sometimes she needed to punish them, just a little, like today.

Naomi shuffled in with a plate of bacon and Angelique fed it piece by piece to Hero. Poor Hero. The dog had gone everywhere with Leland before the shih-tzu pups had arrived. Now he was ordered to stay home and seemed to be always awaiting the call from his master which never came.

"Come boy, I will throw the ball for you."

Eyes huge with eagerness Hero stared to see that she meant it then bounded ahead of her toward the lawn. The hackles on his back rose as the shih-tsus sent up an hysterical crescendo from their pen by the garage and Angelique heard the chauffeur shout at them. Like many of Leland's purchases they were the first of their breed on the island. Hero had been the first great dane, then Joseph Tregaron had imported one, causing Leland's loss of interest in his dog. There'd been the Abyssinian cats, the prize Ayershire bull that had immediately caught tick fever and died, the two ex-olympic horses he seldom rode, and all the cars. At first it had bothered her, then she had stopped thinking about it as she had Leland's women whom at first she had silently agonized over and now ignored. But Hero still

loved his master and sometimes she had to turn away from the grief in his eyes.

Angelique followed the lashing stern onto the grass and threw the red ball he brought her, laughing at his coltish gamboling. It was going to be a perfect day. The station wagon crunched down the gravel drive. She threw the ball four more times then told the dog, "You rest now, it is getting hot."

He looked at her with mournful eyes and she heard the ball drop from his jaws as she went into the house.

She kept Miss Martin waiting a full fifteen minutes before she finally came out and slid into the front seat, letting the girl close the car door behind her.

CHAPTER II

It was an hour and a half's journey into Royaltown up the narrow twisty road over the mountains. Usually Angelique drove her own Mercedes, enjoying the challenge of the climb and sharp curves, but today she let the girl drive the clumsy station wagon with its left side steering wheel and boring automatic transmission.

Verdant rain forest crowded both sides of the road, sometimes closing overhead, threatening like the shutter of a camera to snap off the light completely. An ugly John Crow waited on the carcass of a run-over dog until the car was almost upon it before lumbering awkwardly into the air where it sailed gracefully, waiting to land and continue its meal. In several places women sat alone with baskets of mangoes and guavas to sell, their shacks hidden up narrow trails behind them. Sudden waterfalls sent spray spattering across the windscreen and wildly driven banana trucks swayed around corners far over the line, seeming bent on destruction,

white grins delighting from the darkness of their cabs.

Thank God she's a good driver, thought Angelique. Notion of talking to the girl never crossed her mind.

It was cool and misty on top of the mountain but when they began the descent on the other side heat from the plain reached for them with dusty arms. A wide river tumbled and brown children swung back and forth across it, clinging to a liana, laughing and kicking. Soon people and donkeys cluttered the road and other roads brought more traffic. Houses appeared and then small shops. Enveloped by the turgid heat and smells of civilization the cars moved slowly, crawling past white helmeted constables who stood secure on unbrella shaded pedestals in the center of intersections, commanding obedience with a ballet of white gloved hands.

"Park by the police station, there is usually room there," Angelique directed.

The city's bustle stimulated her. Cars, trucks, bicycles, donkeys, coconut vendors and pedestrians all vied for space. Singsong voices were blended by the hot straw-smelling breeze to mix with bells, horns and the clatter of hooves. Bits of torn canvas drifted lazily trying to shield nondescript store fronts from the sun.

By contrast the police station was a large modern cement building and after parking Angelique waited for Miss

Martin to open the door for her. "I want you to come with me," she said stepping out in one flowing movement. "Perhaps you will learn something."

Without a pause she joined the throng on the sidewalk - ignoring beggers and scorning the gaudily dressed tourists who were harassed on every side by hawkers selling shell jewelry, baskets and hats. Everyone stepped aside for Angelique who walked with cool deliberation, heels tapping neatly on the pavement among sandals and bare feet, toward the finest jewelry store in town.

The Indian salesman fawned, eternally bent at the waist, smiling and rubbing plump palms together. "How fine to see you again, Mrs. Brougham Ma'am. What is it that my humble establishment may do for you this most beautiful of days?" He pointedly ignored the following secretary who hovered by the door sniffing the perfumed air and looking about her at the hushed templelike interior designed to humble all but the most wealthy.

"I require a jade ring - to match a certain dress." Angeliques tones were crisp, cracking the silence.

"Ah, but Madame does not want to look at these." The salesman's ringed hands disparaged the glittering display cases and he waddled in his aura of cologne and exotic hair oil toward the back room to reappear with a reverently

held box. "Here are stones more worthy." He set the box down as though it contained priceless eggs on the verge of cracking.

Rings lay in smug splendor nestled against black velvet.

"Miss Martin, come, help me choose." Angelique didn't look up but was keenly aware of the reluctant timidity with which the girl came to stand beside her. The prices on discrete tags were high and Angelique relished the hopeless hunger with which the foolish creature gazed. Now know the difference between wife and plaything, be envious, stupid one! It was good to rub their noses in their presumption sometimes. "Well?" She broke the thick silence.

The salesman's shoulders were stiff with disapproval and he seemed suddenly asthmatic.

Miss Martin's hand fluttered over her flaming pimple and finally, with an air of desperation pointed to a ring. "That looks nice." Her voice had lost its spine.

Angelique poked the chosen jewel disdainfully, her nose tight. "Terrible choice, can you not see how badly it is set? Choose another."

Angelique could smell the nervousness of the girl, hear the whimper in her breath. "Well?"

"I don't know ... I can't ..."

"You have no opinion?" She gave a little laugh.

The salesman wheezed his disgust and Angelique, shutting the girl out, leaned over to inspect the rings one by one, tossing them aside like bruised grapes. She stopped, holding one. "This will do."

The clerk sighed, flicking his tongue across his lips as he saw the imperial jade with diamonds on a platinum setting. "This will do quite well." She slid the ring onto her finger and the three of them looked at the flawless beauty of hand and jewel exquisitely suited to each other. Miss Martin twisted her stubby fingers into the straps of her handbag and sought to hide in the shadows.

Only one thing marred the pleasure of Angelique's purchase - instead of talking the price down as was the custom, making a game of it, she without pause wrote a check and fluttered it carelessly onto the counter. One wouldn't want the secretary to misunderstand.

Outside on the sunscorched pavement she turned to the girl. "Did you learn something? I hope so. Now go pick up the bird seed then wait for me outside the Tipperary Club." She held out a five pound note. "Buy yourself lunch," she said.

Angelique was glad to be alone. The pleasure gained from these small cruelties was really very fleeting and unworthy but sometimes she needed them, small useless attacks that

they were.

People made way for her automatically as she walked and she paid no heed to their involuntary admiration. Suddenly a small boy blocked her path, hunched over struggling to tie a shoelace. She stopped entranced by his likeness to Peter.

"Could you help?" Frustrated eyes looked up.

"Out of the lady's way, James. She doesn't want to be bothered by you." A woman jerked him away by one arm, laces flapping. How Angelique's fingers longed to tie them!

She walked quickly on and down four brick steps into the cool recesses of the Tipperary Club, a haven for the businessman and European who sought relief from the hubbub of the streets outside.

"Bon jour, Madame Brougham," bowed the polished Maitre d' as his eyes flitted appreciatively from alligator clad toes, across her rings and up to the comb in her hair. "Je suis enchante de vous revoir." His voice praised her and he led her to a table where she would be seen, an ornament to his restaurant. With a flourish he seated her and she sat elegantly erect like a fine portrait against the rich panelling of the wall behind.

"Que voulez-vous commander, Madame?" The maitre d' stood at attention beside her like an entrepreneur demanding credit for her presence.

"Un martini sec, si vous plais, Pierre." Angelique watched him leave. Because they were both french there was a bond between them and an unspoken wish to speak about their country. Because of their difference in station they never did but each always experienced pleasure in seeing the other and exchanging a few words in their native tongue.

The low hum of voices and subdued tinkle of cutlery was soothing and the smooth efficiency of the waiters a welcome relief from the lackadaisacle ways of the native servants at Brougham Hall. Angelique ordered a meal and contentedly surveyed the room. Several people bowed to her and she afforded them a nod and slight smile. Giving herself up to the comfort of this air-conditioned oasis she enjoyed her drink, feeling refreshed and suddenly posessed of an appetite she hadn't suspected.

As she raised her fork with a juicy shrimp impaled upon it she watched the new ring sparkle on her right hand. What a delicious green, like limes or under the sea. My birthday gift - but what is a gift one buys oneself? She looked at her simple wedding band. It had cost so little from that tiny half bombed out shop in her village and yet it had been worth more than all the diamonds and precious stones she had received since. Honest and plain it had promised much so long ago.

She looked up feeling a presence beside her.

"Good day, Mrs. Brougham. You are looking sad." It was the soft voice of Mr. Landy, the strange little man who had befriended her long ago and amused her always by the adoration in his eyes. He reminded her of one of his own wild Brahma bulls: handsome and proud in its own territory, awkward and shy in the world of others.

"No, I am greatly enjoying my meal actually," she replied, annoyed as she had been so often before at his way of seeing inside her heard.

"I wish you many happy returns of your day."

"Fancy you remembering, dear Mr. Landy, but at my age I would rather you forgot." She looked down at her glass not wanting him to see how very much this one greeting touched her.

"But you only grow more beautiful," his tanned cheeks blushed dark. "Peter will be home soon?"

"Oh yes!" She smiled her joy, "On thursday."

Another figure loomed, pushing Mr. Landy aside. "Hello Angela. As lovely as ever I see." Joseph Tregaron smiled moistly down, his eyes racing hungrily over her as she knew they did every woman from nine to ninety. "And how's Leland?"

"We are both well thankyou. And Doris?"

"Fine, fine. Don't forget the party tomorrow."

"We will be there." She felt the heat of his hand on

her shoulder for an instant, then he moved on to a table where a pretty mulatto girl waited. Idly Angelique watched him sit down and take her hand, whispering into her ear. At first Angelique had been shocked at how blatantly the men displayed their mistresses, and had mentioned it to her one good friend Melissa Ingrams who had laughed. "My dear, one must just ignore it. Men behave differently in the tropics. Find yourself a lover and keep quiet - everyone has a grand time."

Angelique had laughed and disbelieved - for a while. Now many years later she followed half her friend's advice but she had never taken a lover. When she had finally allowed herself to believe that Leland was seeing other women she had wanted to but could never become interested enough in any man though the opportunities were many. They were either too coarse, too childish, too old, too serious, too ugly, too handsome or perhaps it was just a voice that left her cold and a little lonely. Finally she had stopped thinking about it and wrapped her solitude about her like an icy cape, treating her husband politely and seeing him as a stranger so even his infidelities meant nothing to her.

Angelique looked for Mr. Landy but could not see him. He must have left the restaurant. Tregaron was such a boor pushing in like that, frightening the poor little man away.

"Angela darling!"

Like a flight of wild birds, red maned and angular, Melissa bore down on her. Angelique smiled, "How good to see you. Sit and eat with me, do."

"Just coffee and perhaps one of those gorgeous cakes ... oh but Angela, I must tell you about my simply devastating new man!" Melissa sat down amid a tinkling of bracelets, called her order to a waiter and, elbows on the table, eyes all green excitement, launched into breathless details of her latest affair.

Angelique listened, amused as always by her friend's insouciant innocence, perpetually inviolate although it seemed she had a new lover every few weeks. She had never found the courage to ask what Bill, Melissa's sweet, college professor husband, thought about it all. Probably the only faithful man on the island, she thought watching the mobile face opposite, how ironic!

"And he's picking me up here at two. Do I look all right?" Melissa dashed extravagantly ringed fingers through her hair.

"You look lovely."

Reassured, Melissa ate a cake and sipped her coffee, then looked around the room. "Is anyone here?"

"Only Joseph Tregaron over there and Mr. Landy, but I think he left."

"Your dear devoted Mr. Landy. What is his first name anyway, Angela? Why on earth don't you call him by it?"

"It just never came up and it is much too late to start calling him anything but Mr. Landy now. Peter and I always call him Eagle-eye between ourselves. He can spot things at a distance one would not think possible, it is quite uncanny sometimes." Not always at a distance either, thought Angelique, remembering how, after being great friends in the beginning, she had read the understanding in his eyes when things had begun to go wrong between herself and Leland, and had stayed away from him.

"Perhaps I should take him under my wing and teach him what life's all about. It's time he learned what women are for and he's not unattractive."

"You'd scare him to death, Melissa, but I must say it would be amusing. I think he would run like a frightened calf. Actually on a horse he can be quite handsome. His bandy legs do not show and if he does not smile the gap between his teeth remains hidden."

The two women laughed and Angelique looked at her watch. "I must go. Your friend will be here soon. I will see you tomorrow no? At the party."

Heat submerged her in a suffocating wave as the door of the restaurant closed with a muffled thud. Thank goodness, she thought seeing the station wagon waiting at the curb. It seemed to shimmer and melt under the burning sun and inside the secretary's face shone red and perspiring.

Her appearance offended Angelique and she wished she could be alone for the drive back. The sacks of seed, for the budgies Leland had bought and now seldom looked at, gave off a heavy musty smell. "Do get a move on," Angelique said as soon as she was seated.

Most shops were closed and what people there were on the streets drifted lanquidly. Traffic barely moved and animals hung their heads with half closed fly-covered eyes. Voices and car horns sounded whining and peevish. The distant blue hills teased the people on the sweltering plain and Angelique wwished Miss Martin would drive faster. As they turned onto the main road out of town and traffic thinned she gave a sigh of relief, now they could make time and quickly reach the cool. An ominous bumping came from beneath the car and Miss Martin pulled raggedly to the side and stopped.

"A tire gone, I'm afraid," she said.

"Stupid Roosevelt, he should check these things." Angelique wished the chauffeur were here now so she could watch him sweat in the hot sun. That would teach him to be negligent. Damn, she had had such a pleasant luncheon too. "Well get out and stop someone." The girl was so helpless!

Miss Martin, crimson and unhappy stood in the road. The only person in sight was an old man on a bicycle. "I say, could you please help me change the tire?" she asked half heartedly as he came alongside.

The man stopped and looked with sunken hazed eyes at

the car. Then he lifted his cap and scratched his head. "Heavenly day, Miss, I have no idea 'bout such things." He pedalled his squeaking bicycle off down the road to be lost among wavelets of heat.

A truck roared past.

"Miss Martin, why did you not stop that instead of a feeble old man?"

"I couldn't," the girl said, sweat running down her cheeks, desperation in her eyes.

"I see I must do it myself or we will bake to death." Angelique got out, hating the heat and the delay.

A vehicle was already coming and she stepped in front of it raising an authoritative hand. Heat burned through the soles of her shoes and thought that she might be getting tar on them made her angrier.

Ticking like an ancient sewing machine a battered yellow pickup pulled in behind the station wagon and stopped with a pop of exhaust. Its door opened with a cry for oil and a short stocky white man climbed out. "Well lass, you look in a proper fix for a hot day, you do." He ran the back of a freckled hand across his forehead, almost the only part of his face not covered by neat red beard. More red hair curled from under a black beret. Angelique looked at him with distaste, irritated by his lack of respect, the knobbly knees peeking from under khaki shorts, and the twinkle she saw in his blue eyes. But he was all they had

and she wanted the tire changed.

"There is a spare in the back. I am so very hot," she said, "I hope you will be quick."

For a moment the man looked at her, his eyes like cold mountain water, then he laughed, "Well I'll be," he muttered, and went to the rear of the station wagon.

Angelique sat inside and listened to the clanking and scuffling. Miss Martin came to her.

"Is he capable?" Angelique asked.

"Part of the jack's missing. He's going to stop somebody and borrow one.

"Sit down, no need to get sunstroke."

Miss Martin got in and Angelique watched the man stop a truck. In no time its leathery driver and he, working together, had the tire changed.

"A right big nail," the Englishman said bringing it to show her.

Angelique looked at it with distaste. "Is everything all right now?"

"Aye, you should get home with no trouble."

Angelique held out sixpence for the truck driver who spat on it as he walked away.

"Perhaps you can help me now," said the red-haired man. "I'm heading for a guest house owned by a man called Jones near Port Dolores. Do you know it?"

Remembrance came like the touch of an electric wire

and for a moment Angelique saw the big old house that had once been a second home to her; saw the motherly face of Mrs. Jones. She had loved that black face once. "Yes, I know the place," she said, "Keep to this road over the mountain and follow the signs to Port Dolores. Before the town, just where you will catch first sight of the sea, there is a bridge. Take the dirt road to the left and after one half mile you will reach the Guest House." She paused. Perhaps she would send a message ... but no, it was too long a time. Tightening her lips she turned to her handbag and took out half a crown. "Thank you for your assistance," she said, "Buy yourself a beer."

"Nay, lass, I don't drink beer," he said and strode to his pickup. In a moment it spluttered and rattled out of sight.

"What a common, rude man," Angelique said returning the coin to her purse.

"I liked him," said the secretary. "He comes from Yorkshire. I could tell by his accent though it's not so strong as my uncle's."

"Come, let us get home," said Angelique.

It wasn't long before they caught up to the yellow pickup and had to creep behind it over several miles of narrow road, watching the yorkshireman's stiff neck and black beret through the window. Angelique was sure he kept them behind him on purpose for they passed several

places where he could have pulled in and let them by. Eventually he stopped at a small roadside bar and she thought she saw him laugh as they sped away.

The quiet green mountain closed about them and Angelique relaxed, letting her eyes rest unfocussed on the forest, her thoughts returning to Melissa's effervescence.

As soon as they got home she went for a swim, enjoying her body, cool and agile in the water. In a few days Peter would be swimming with her. She could almost hear his excited peals of laughter, see his seal-sleek little head. She left the pool and returned to the house, her mind busy with plans for his arrival.

That night Leland rolled over to her side of the bed and she suffered his grunting sweaty hulk. Staring into the darkness she wondered if he was as emotionless with other women. Today's had obviously been a disappointment. The squeal of a mongoose came from the forest and a dog barked. Her thoughts wandered. I wonder if Peter will have cool clothing - probably outgrown last year's - must take him to Royaltown and buy more - show him the newly excavated ruins at Old Harbor - he will like that. Oh Leland, do hurry, my hair is sweaty and it is such a bore. Must send a work party to Whiskey Cove - make sure the hut is clean - and the beach - fill the ice-box -

glad we bought that bit of sea - Peter loves it - so do I. Not much fun to go alone though. Must take the first-aid kit - last year he cut his foot - all that blood - frightened me. During the war blood was nothing - not my little boy's though ... Thank God!

Final gaspings signalled Leland was done and without a word he rolled onto his back and snores bubbled through his mustache.

Angelique left the bed and, after showering, drifted out onto the moon-haloed lawn. She felt Hero's head push under her hand and a soft breeze cooled her forehead as he looked across the black valleys and molded contours of the hills. A drum beat softly like a giant heart and Angelique felt an intruder, a wraith, insignificant to the island now being reborn in all its primeval innocence and beauty: releasing its soul like a mighty stallion casting off the trappings and harness put upon it by day, reaching back to its beginnings of savage harmony. Angelique's spirit seemed to swell with it and fight for its own release.

For a long motionless time she floated on the sounds and feelings about her.

A nightingale began to sing, bats squeaked and circled overhead, and fireflies lit the bushes. The night was suddenly busy. Hero shook his head and followed her back into the house to flop with a thud across the bedroom door.

Lying with just the sheet over her Angelique watched the stripes on the wall caused by moonlight prying through half open jalousies. She thought about Tregaron's party tomorrow. Usually they were dull: the same people, same conversations. Oh well, there was always the chance someone new and interesting might be there.

CHAPTER III

Night isolated the silver Rolls Royce as it purred along narrow roads driven by Roosevelt the chauffeur, puffed with pride in his newly pressed uniform, cap pulled so low he had to lift his chin to see. Behind him, separated by glass, sat Angelique cooly elegant in virginal white, and Leland in Saville Row suit, the width of the seat between them.

The car slowed as it passed through Roosevelt's village and though he moved his head neither to right nor left his eyes shifted, searching to see which of his neighbors saw him. Later he would pedal home on his bicycle like everyone else but for now the moment was his. Darkness brought people out like moths to flutter around doorways and hover in the streets. Men laughed and talked as they drank beer, leaning against the galvanized walls of Stanley's Bar, and children darted in and out of shadows. The labor of the day was forgotten and music blared, calling folk to the earthen dance floor from which at intervals young couples would disappear into the bamboo.

Roosevelt didn't mind missing all this. The girls

would be awaiting him whatever time he got back, and as he left the village behind he smiled smugly and stepped on the gas.

Angelique saw his smile and wished he'd keep his mind on his driving. The road was black but for the searching headlights which would suddenly, from emptyness, pick up a figure trotting along the side with a load on its head, seem to pull it toward the car, then cast it behind as though it had never been.

As they turned up Tregaron's drive Angelique opened the built-in make-up compartment and checked her face while Leland smoothed his sparse well oiled hair with his palms and ran a nicotine stained forefinger along his mustache.

The high stone Great House was afire with lights, and noise poured into the night. Men in tuxedos and women in expensive gowns and priceless jewelry wandered from room to high ceilinged room while servants, like dusty shadows, crept between them with trays of drinks.

High women's voices rose to quick shrill crescendos that collapsed to be lost in the rumbling tones of men. Now and again a burst of music could be heard, discordant and lost, separated from its drowned companion chords, and cigar smoke and perfume subdued the scent from massed clouds of flowers that blazed color from every possible space.

Doris Tregaron, her hennaed hair already out of control,

eyes bright with nervous tears that would be shed before the evening was out, swam, spaniel like , through the crowd to greet Leland and Angelique. She introduced them to a Lord and Lady Partridge, both plump and gray, who whatever they wore would seem to be dressed in tweeds. Before the conversation was far advanced everyone knew that Lady Partridge bred poodles and Orlando and Trusilda had each won championships at Crufts. As soon as possible Leland and Angelique moved on and went their separate ways. Leland to gravitate toward an Oriental girl with green fingernails while Angelique listened to an Iranian gentleman with greasy skin and a way of moving his head like a pump as he talked. Gracefully she escaped him to whirl around the dance floor with Duke D'Orsay, so tall and thin it seemed his back must break if he dared to bend.

The hours passed with Angelique perpetually the shining center of an admiring crowd. Sophisticated, beautiful, always saying the right thing in her velvet voice and enchanting accent. Smiling, listening, clever, she was appreciated by men and women alike - and she was bored to utter weariness.

Outside, fields rolled away into mist that crept down from the hills, causing natives to shiver in their huts and huddle close to small fires. The house and its noise was like an illusion and its sounds alien to the nightingale and the drum.

"I mean what can you do with them?" A plump woman

exclaimed rolling her eyes. "I told Martha explicity - Martha, I said, as soon as you hear our bedroom door open put the eggs on to boil. Teddy is very fussy about his eggs you know. Well, last night he got up to go to the bathroom, around two it must have been, and when we went in for breakfast at our usual time of nine, the eggs were like rocks, literally rocks. My God, I said to Martha, how did you manage this? I hear your door open in the night and I do as you tell me ... Honestly would you believe it?"

Angelique hid a yawn behind her wine glass and turned to the sallow, skeletal heiress who commanded her attention with a long story about her honeymoon in Acupulco with husband number four. By the fatuous, rather drunken smile on the perspiring face of husband number five he seemed to enjoy the tale more than anyone else and Angelique wondered at Tregarons inviting such a common couple.

An attentive smile fixed on her face she listened to snatches of other conversations as the woman talked on - and on. A strong British voice behind her said, "Has one son. Doesn't give a damn about him though, off to school he goes, then she forgets him. Money like water and beautiful - but no heart, absolutely no heart."

Turning slightly to exchange her glass for a fresh one offered by a solomn black girl, Angelique saw the woman who spoke. A pompous pouter pigeon with diamonds spilled across her bosom like champagne bubbles. Her small eyes

caught Angelique's and quickly slid away.

She was talking about me! The realization was a shock. How could anyone think that? To be sure she seldom mentioned Peter, but only because she knew that once started she could never stop and it was such bad taste. But how could anyone ...

The heiress droned on. "My lord," she was saying, "It makes no difference what country you're in the blacks are all as ignorant. I mean when I order something I want it now not in fifteen minutes ..."

Men's voices were raised excitedly and Angelique wondered at the urgency in their tones. From the corner of her eye she saw Tregaron to her left with several large land owners.

"It could turn nasty," one said, "I'm thinking of selling out and going back to England."

"It's certainly not looking too good for sure," said another. "They've got leaders now, that's the trouble and once these black chaps are roused they'll go anywere, do anything. It's a dangerous situation but we'll just have to keep our eyes open. Where's that maid with the whiskey?"

The heiress was demanding to be taken to food and Number five led her off. Joseph Tregaron stepped up to Angelique, ostentatiously kissing her hand, his face flushed

with drink. "Now my dear, how are you doing?"

"Very well thank you, Joseph. I overheard you just now. You sounded upset. What was it about?"

"Nothing. Nothing. Just rumors and the natives a little restless. Think they want out from under we British. Foolishness that's all. Nothing for you to worry about."

"What nerve!" said Angelique. "How could they think of such a thing. After all we have done for them! Leland will be absolutely furious! But tell me, Joseph, why should they want this? Would they really be better off without us?"

"No, they'd be worse off, and poorer, but it would be their own poverty and they could blame us for deserting them. Ask the U.S. for aid when the crops fail and spend it on some other project that would fail as miserably. Come, enough of that, dance with me."

He guided her onto the dance floor where the small self-conscious orchestra played a waltz. Though short and rather portly Tregaron danced well and Angelique gave herself up to the music. As they spun her eye fell on the black musicians. Were they thinking that soon they might own this house themselves? But the blacks were always so placid. She thought of the round beaming faces of Naomi, and Cara, and cook. The polite "good morning, Mums". Sud-

denly the sullen face of Luther, the yard boy, flashed across her mind with his heavy brows and defiant jaw. She always felt uneasy about him, like having a half tame panther prowling the property. Yes ... him she could imagine...

"Let's get a drink," The music had paused and Tregaron guided her toward the bar. He stopped by the doors to the terrace and wiped his brow with a blue monogrammed handkerchief. "Let's go outside. It's stuffy in here."

"I think not, Joseph," Smiling Angelique unhinged her fingers from his.

"Oh, Angelique, why must you, the most desirable woman on the island, be so difficult?"

With a light laugh she turned to greet Melissa who emerged from a nearby cluster.

"Am I interrupting something?" she asked.

"I'm afraid not," said Tregaron with a melodramatic sigh, and lifting his imaginary glass in a toast he left them.

"He never gives up does he?" laughed Melissa.

"Have you ever ...?" Angelique hesitated.

"Slept with Tregaron? Heavens no. Goodness, Doris is a friend of mine!"

"You are a good woman," said Angelique warmly, feeling a surge of affection for this puzzling creature who

opposed every expection. Even in appearance with her long horse face, straight shoulder length hair and strange idea of fashion. Tonight she wore what looked like a suit of black and white striped prison underwear festooned with ropes of gold chain which Angelique knew were family heirlooms, and yet, as always she looked strikingly marvellous. Angelique also knew that the bangle around Melissa's ankle was worn, perhaps unconsciously , to flaunt her tinge of black slave blood. Through the prolifacacy of her great grandfather she was related to half the blacks on the island she had once joked. Angelique wondered if she would have boasted of this had she not looked so aristocratically white no one believed her.

"Angela, you never told me it was your birthday, yesterday. I was simply devastated to get home and see it in my little book, and there I was talking to you and didn't wish you many happy returns!"

"I forgive you," Angelique laughed. "Who are you with tonight?"

"Bill. I'm being ever so good." Melissa waved across the room to the pleasant looking young husband who talked earnestly to an older bearded man. "But come, I have a late birthday gift for you in the other room."

"Oh Melissa..." But Melissa gripped her hand and led her through the crowd.

It took a long time as everyone wanted to have them stop and talk but eventually they reached the arch to the next room. Melissa stopped. "There. Fresh on the island and I give him to you, though I must admit to being strongly tempted myself."

Angelique's eyes went straight to the tall man in military uniform who faced away from them. "Really Melissa, you know I am not interested."

"It doesn't hurt to meet him does it? He's just come from England and he's been to France so I thought you might like to talk, that's all. But then if you don't like my present ..."

Hearing genuine disappointment in her friend's voice Angelique quickly apologised . "I am sorry, Mel, of course I will be delighted to meet him and I admit he does look very nice."

"Wait here."

Angelique stood alone for the first time all evening. She rested on the buzz of voices. Heard her husband's raised loudly for an instant in another room and knew by its belligerent tone that he was now quite drunk. She envisioned his face bloated and glistening, lips loosely pouting, eyes like washed out marbles behind the steamy wire rimmed glasses that suited him so poorly. She hated to see him this way, hated the vulgar stories and his reaching

for glass after glass.

Her eye caught Mr. Landy's across the room, making her forget Leland in the amusement of thinking how like a sparrow in a cage of canaries their neighbor looked. Why did he ever come? She waved in reply to his shy smile then a figure came between them.

"Angelique, I'd like you to meet Captain David Beresford," said Melissa.

"How nice to meet you," she said giving him her hand. "Melissa said you are new to the island?"

"I arrived last week."

He seemed well bred and his face was not unpleasant. In fact his eyes were really very nice, honest and clear. Perhaps it would not be such a trial talking to him and there was something about a uniform... "Tell me, how is England? It is three years since I was there."

"Just as beautiful as ever. Of course the drought last year made it difficult for farmers but rainfall seems normal this spring."

Angelique couldn't help but smile. How like the English, this conversation dominated by weather. Of course the subject wasn't worth mentioning here with so little change. "Melissa said you were in France recently."

"Last summer. Had a marvellous time exploring in a rented car." He spoke with enthusiasm and Angelique was

delighted to learn he had spent a night in her home town. She asked him about the town hall, the small chemist's shop, the inn.

"Ah, the inn," Captain Beresford's face broke into a wide grin, " What a character the landlord was! My french is not very good and he said he spoke english so, in the morning, I asked him for some soap. Before I knew what was happening he was shouting to the kitchen. "Soup, Jaques, bring soup for the Englishman." "No, soap," I said, " to wash with. Soap." "Ah, yes, soup good soup. One moment." The soup arrived and I had to drink it though it was breakfast time, and do without my wash."

Angelique laughed, remembering the burly innkeeper of her youth. "Surely that must have been Arman. He does it on purpose, the devil, refusing to understand foreigners. I knew him when I was a little girl. During the war he was a member of the Underground. He saved many men and taught me to shoot."

"Did you have a rough time? I saw the cemetery."

"It was very bad but my father dressed me in child's clothing and made me plait my hair so no one paid much attention to me. I forget the bad things."

"Melissa said you met your husband then."

For the first time Angelique noticed Melissa had left them. "Yes, Leland was in the British army and was shot as

he came down by parachute. Papa found him in the woods behind our house and we hid him in the cellar until he was better. By that time the war had ended." How long it was since she had thought of those days when she'd scrabbled for food and lived in fear that the wounded young soldier would be discovered. What a glorious terrifying time it had been!

"And you fell in love just like a story. How romantic."

"Yes, it was." Angelique forgot the party and the young man as she remembered.

"May I meet him?"

Jerked back to the present Angelique thought of the drunken bloated man in the next room. "Perhaps one day," she said. "Tell me more about yourself. Do you like it here? Have you been in the tropics before?"

After a time Sir George Tibbets joined them. He was a wiry old man with elfin eyes and a curling white mustache, who lived with Lady Tibbits in the house across the valley from Brougham Hall. "My dear Mrs. Brougham, we're off to England for six months and suddenly find ourselves in a bit of a fix. Blowed if the Busha from Hayne's property didn't disappear last week just when we'd arranged for him to keep an eye on the place. I was talking to Leland a moment ago and he mentioned we might possibly presume on you to look at the place now and again. We'd be most frightfully

grateful but if it's any trouble at all..."

"Why certainly, Sir George, it will be a pleasant ride for me. I will come to see Lady Lillian tomorrow afternoon and she can acquaint me with what to watch out for."

"Marvellous! I can't thank you enough." The old man turned to Captain Beresford. "Now, tell me, who's your commanding officer? I was in the army you know. Probably met the chap."

Before he could get fully launched into reminiscences of his army days Doris Tregaron called for silence. A concert pianist arranged herself at the piano and her fingers danced across the keys. Angelique sat in the chair brought by the young Captain and lost herself in music, her eyes resting on the stars outside, her thoughts taking her to a distant hill where Debussy's notes whispered through blades of French grass. She wished it would never end. Music was to her as nectar to a hummingbird, a sweet and replenishing food.

But it did end and she was again surrounded, replying to trite conversation, laughing at jokes she had heard before. People surged, formed groups, broke away and formed others. Laughter became louder and more hysterical. Food was served. Rich and overspiced. Half empty plates were left everywhere and crumbs marred the formality of evening dress.

Angelique found Leland and after effusive farewells got him down the steps without stumbling until Roosevelt came running and helped him into the car. They started for home and the night seemed very quiet.

Leland mumbled from where he slumped in the far corner. "Good party, eh? Couldn't get Noel though - asked him - Freddy told me. Came to ours though didn't he!" " His chuckle bubbled and faded.

Angelique sat upright, looking forward. Yes, he came to ours, and nearly spoiled everything with his drunken obscenities. This had been a good party. Yes there were moments she had quite enjoyed. Fancy Arman still being alive. Still running the inn. She looked at the chauffeur's head silhouetted in front of her and wondered what he'd been doing all this time. Perhaps planning a riot? She smiled, more likely giving one of Tregaron's maids something to think about in nine months. She hoped Cara had obeyed her order not to go home until their return. A glass of warm milk would be nice.

Later as she was about to get into bed where Leland already slept, Angelique looked through the window and saw the great dane standing statuelike on the lawn. His sharp ears were pricked, listening. For a moment she thought she heard distant shouts, then there was only the sound of insects and her husband's snores.

CHAPTER IV

"Leave the Colonel sleep," Angelique warned Cara next morning. Leland was always in a foul mood after a night's drinking and would bellow and roar about the house until the maids dissolved into tears and nothing got done. Better to let him sleep it off. She took a note pad to the breakfast table and as she ate jotted down a list of Peter's favorite foods to give to Cook who already knew them as well as she.

Roosevelt arrived for the day's orders and his face grew even blacker as Angelique told him he was to take Cook to market, then come back for five women field-workers. These he must take, with brooms, to Whiskey Cove. "Make it nice for Master Peter," she said.

The chauffeur listened with half-closed eyes, pride writhing beneath this onslaught of demeaning chores. Angelique enjoyed his discomfort and suspected the women were in for a rough ride.

Having finished her coffee she went through the house, making sure everything was in perfect order. Flowers fresh, curtains clean. Her final stop was Peter's room. His

pictures decorated the walls: soccar stars, animals, and modern buildings. His faithful teddy bear, one ear replaced with the toe of a sock, sat on his pillow. Angelique remembered how she had been going to repair it herself with something nicer but a maid had got to it first. She had been upset at the time. Now she picked up the worn toy and stroked its fuzzy head before putting down. She began to leave the room. A sudden suspician crossed her mind and she turned back to the bed. Flipping a corner of the blanket she saw clean sheets stretched smoothe and white. Clucking her tongue, heels tapping angrily she went to the dining room where Naomi lethargically polished the silver tea service. "Where is Cara? Tell her I want her."

The little maid scurried off to be replaced by a nervous eyed Cara. "Yes, Mum?"

"Why are there sheets on Master Peter's bed?"

"He soon home, Mum."

"You know not to put sheets on until the day he come. Remember, Cara? You did the same thing last year. Take them off immediately.

"Yes, Mum." The girl fled.

Why did they have to be told everything over and over? The sheets must be sweet from the cedar chest. Humidity here was so high one had to be careful or things became

musty in no time.

Angelique unpacked a box of new books from London and fitted them into the bookcase. She was sorry she hadn't thought to order some Juveniles for Peter, these were not at all suitable with their sex and dreadful language.

"Miz Ingrams want you on the phone, Mum," Naomi announced at the door.

Angelique went to the desk and picked up the receiver, imagining Melissa lounging in bed wrapped in some luxurious robe, probably with a tray on her lap. She never rose before noon and couldn't understand anyone who did.

"Hello, Melissa."

"Angela! Did you like him?"

"Who do you mean did I like?"

"Honestly, Angela, David of course!"

Smiling at her friend's exasperation Angelique said, "Of course, he is a most charming young man."

"Must you be so prim and proper? Did you plan an assignation?"

"Melissa, really, must you continuously play the matchmaker? Apart from the fact that I am married he must be fifteen years younger than I."

"What difference does that make, if you like each other? I mean I don't expect you to elope with him."

"Oh, Melli, I know you mean well but I really do not want anyone that way. I did enjoy meeting him though and talking about France was a real birthday present. I do thank you."

"Can we get together for lunch next week?"

"Peter will be here. I will call you."

As she hung up Angelique heard the approaching storm of Leland's grumbling. She ignored his entrance and sorted the already tidy drawer of her desk.

"Bloody head," he moaned. "Bad lot of whiskey Tregaron got. Servants probably stole the good stuff. Where is everyone? Naomi? Coffee! Bet not a stroke of work's been done this morning. Lazy bastards. None of this in the army. If an officer was sick he knew his men were still doing their best - obeying orders. You know where you are in the army." He took his coffee from Naomi who waited anxiously as he looked at it. Seeming unable to find anything wrong he stalked toward the office.

The house sank back into its accustomed quiet. Angelique changed into her bikini. She spent an hour each day by the pool, both for exercise and to keep her tan at its best. Passing the office she went through the games room and bar, where they held their parties, and out to where the olympic sized pool shimmered between marble tiled banks. She frowned to see her chaise longue stacked with

other chairs against the wall and returning to the bar picked up a phone from its place between the bottles. "Naomi, send Luther to me at the pool. Right away."

She dove smoothly into the water and swam three lengths, finishing with one underwater. Rising she was startled to see the dark shape of Luther looming over her but anger quickly came. "Why was my chair not out?" Her tongue was a whip and as the boy went toward the piled furniture she snapped at his broad shoulders. "Do not let it happen again or I will have Colonel cut your pay." Stupid creature! She swam away, defying the tickle between her shoulder blades that warned her not to turn her back on him. When she looked again he had gone and the webbed chair waited. She was angry at herself for that tremor of fear but just for a moment, when she had met Luther's heavily browed eyes, she had remembered the men's conversation last night. Foolishness to even let herself think such nonsence, even if the government did have its troubles they need not concern her. Nothing could happen here, it wouldn't dare.

Leaving the water she relaxed in the sun, slick with oil, a large hat shading her face. Half asleep she listened to the wind rattling the palm fronds and smelt sweet waves of orange blossom, proof that summer was truly here. She and Peter would ride up and look at the trees - quite probably he would need a haircut... Angelique dozed.

Raindrops awakened her, splashing on her stomach and making ever closer circles in the pool. Taking her towel she went in by the bar where she dried herself and sat drinking a ginger-ale, watching the quick storm dash its water to earth and move on. A typewriter clacked in the office nearby and she could hear Leland's voice ranting, presumably over the phone. Surely he hadn't always been such a bully.

She went up to the house and, calling for Cara to take her swimming suit, stepped into the shower.

It was annoying to find Leland in the bedroom when she came out and she ignored him, dressing in the clothes laid out for her on the bed.

"Twenty bloody men when I need fifty," he said almost to himself. "If I don't get those bloody bananas cut and ready for shipment in time I'll lose the lot. Why won't the bloody crew work?"

Angelique coiled her hair. She would have it shampood tomorrow.

Leland began to pace, knocking a crimson petal from the hibiscus on the dressing table. "That Tregaron, so blasted smug, got his crop almost in. I work like a navvy, watching every minute, and still they let me down."

Angelique had heard it all before, every year in fact.

"The more I pay the less work I get from the bastards."

Angelique sighed and spoke to him through the mirror. "You know they only work until they have enough money for the week, then work again only after they have spent it. Tregaron pays when all the work is done, that is why he is finished so quickly. You should do the same."

"It's against the law."

Angelique shrugged. She did not admire the way some of the property owners treated their laborers. "How are prices this year?"

Anger left. "High. It'll be a bloody good year!" Then returned. "If I can get the crop cut." He stormed out and soon she heard him shouting at someone outside, then the grinding gears of the landrover. Good, he'd be gone for a while. These disturbances were very annoying and things always worked out.

Twenty minutes later, smart in fawn jodhpurs, white shirt and short polished boots, Angelique took her gaucho style hat with the scarf tied around its crown from the hall stand and placed it on her head. Crop under her arm she pulled on string gloves and left for the stable. Hero joined her as she wound down the cobbled path through terraced gardens crowded with flowers. Vibrant reds, oranges, yellows, and among them hummingbirds and butterflies tumbled like truant petals.

It was almost a disappointment to find the bay gelding

saddled and waiting. Having heard Luther earlier, when she had been dressing, she had called to him to tell the groom she would be riding, very much doubting she would pass on the message. On her way down she had planned a sharp speech of reprimand. Had looked forward to humbling those arrogant eyes, but he had fooled her.

Tobe brought Harpoon from his stall and gave her a leg up. She touched the big thoroughbred into a swinging walk down the path that funnelled into the dark banana grove. Looking back she chirruped to Hero who still stood in bright sunlight facing the direction Leland had taken. He cocked his head, paused a moment, then plunged to follow her. It was quiet in the cool green shade. Only muffled hoofbeats and the occasional clink of the bit gave away their presence. Birds fluttered among razor sharp leaves and now and again a workman, machete in hand, stem of green bananas on his head, stood aside to let her pass then jogged swiftly on.

After about fifteen minutes they reached the paved parish road. Harpoon trotted, rhymic clapping on the tarmac. Hero loping along at heel. Smell of hot tar. The heat pressed down. Reaching the open gates of Worlds End Angelique guided Harpoon into the orange orchard beside the drive. The climb was steep and Hero's tongue hung and dripped while sweat darkened Harpoon's neck and flanks. Bees hummed and

crawled in and out of blossom, weighting branches so they swayed as if touched by a timid breeze, though there was none at all. Angelique wished she had come earlier but as soon as the crest of the hill was reached a salty freshness sprang at her. The sea, a good mile distant, could be seen plainly from this high spot. Blue, all space and enticement, it stretched and melted into the sky. A white ruffle offshore showed where the island's last boundary, the reef, lay.

Reluctantly turning from the view Angelique rode across lawn toward the shining house, all tile, glass and stucco. Sir George and Lady Tibbets had had it built ten years before and Peter called it a flying saucer too content with its landing place to move.

A boy took Harpoon to the stable and Hero, after gulping water from the goldfish pond, slumped gratefully under a philadrendron. Angelique ascended the wide staircase to the verandah where Lady Lillian greeted her with outstretched hands. "Come, my dear, you must be hot and tired." She rang a bell. "Rachel! Lemonade, Rachel, quick!"

Lady Lillian sat straight backed in a white wicker rocking chair that stayed motionless until she talked, then rocked violently accentuating her words. The old woman was all cotton wool hair and powdered wrinkles until she smiled, then the lines darkened into arrows pointing toward her roman nose. She looked at the world through un-

blinking eyes and had a reputation for saying, in her gravelly voice, exactly what she thought - and often it was more than people wished to hear. Angelique enjoyed her, though she didn't see her as often as she would have liked.

For a time they talked generalities, ice clinking in their drinks and a breeze teasing glass wind chimes that hung from the ceiling.

"Are you looking forward to England?" asked Angelique.

"Oh yes," Lady Lillian rocked. "I dearly love the island but six months is enough, then I must escape to a busier life. I need Atlantic winds to invigorate me. What about you? Are you taking a vacation this year?"

"No. I wish I could get Leland to leave for a time but I think he fears everything will fall apart as soon as he turns his back. Of course when he is in England he has nothing to command and that is not to his liking." She laughed, making it a joke, but remembered how miserable he had been in London three years ago. Treated like an ordinary mortal she had seen strain, almost fear, in his eyes. He had cut their visit short and for days after returning had thrown his weight about unbearably.

Lady Lillian leaned forward, eyes bright and voice suprisingly gentle. "You must remember, my dear, that Leland from his earliest years planned for a military career

like that of his father and grandfather. The war made him a hero, praised and honored, each day full of purpose and danger. Then suddenly it was over. Not only the war but his whole career and he was expected to be like any other civilian. Some men can't make that transition. Often they come to islands like this one and set up their own little kingdoms craving to reconstruct the life promised them from birth. It can be like a drug and I have seen men eaten up by it." The creaking of her chair stopped. Even the wind was quiet.

Lady Lillian stamped her intricately carved cane on the floor and pushed herself to her feet. "I'm talking too much, let me show you over the house." She led the way inside. "I didn't want to ask you but there was simply no one we could trust and when Leland suggested it and you accepted we were absolutely delighted. I certainly don't want you to go to any trouble. Make use of the place, swim in the pool or whatever." The cane pointed to a vase. "Ming. Picked it up in China in '52 - and this box." She raised the ebony lid causing bubbles of music to cascade into the room. "My mother owned it when she was a child. Never once broken down over all those years."

They went from room to room, Lady Lillian pointing out and explaining everything. "Just so you'll be able to notice if anything's taken. The police might possibly

find it whereas if they waited till we returned..."

Never fond of Oriental decor Angelique thought the house unattractive but the view from the many large windows made up for it and she found it difficult to keep her eyes from the magnificent jungle clad vista.

At last they reached the gleaming stainless steel kitchen and Angelique wondered if the cook enjoyed it. She knew her's looked on anything new with great suspicion, using only the oldest utensils she could find.

"There, I think that's everything," said Lady Lillian.

They stood at the top of a short flight of steps which led down from the kitchen door to sunbaked ground. Several yards away was a boxshaped cement building. The smell of dank concrete rose, touching something deep in Angelique's memory. What was it? She almost had it, then it slipped away. "May we go down?" she asked.

"Certainly, but it's only the maid's room. Never would live in it though, would rather go home to an old shack whatever time of night I let them off so I think they use it for storage, with perhaps a cot to rest on. You go, I'll wait here."

"I feel it best to be familiar with everything you know, just in case..." Angelique went down and across to the blue door that bristled peeling paint where sun blasted it. Looking at her dusty boots she wondered why she

was doing this. A maid's room! She almost turned away but her hand reached for the door and as it opened she held her breath.

Just as Lady Lillian had said, nothing but brooms and a cot. Through a partially open door she saw a washroom. Nothing. Yet the place had a strange appeal. Angelique straightened her hair in the unframed mirror, eyes searching the corners behind her. Horrible place really. Quickly she left, firmly closing the door, and in a moment had rejoined Lady Lillian.

"Come, I must show you the lovely painting we brought from that woman along the coast. George says she'll be famous one day."

The old woman showed her art treasures but as interested as Angelique was she could not forget the cement room. Its smell haunted her nostrils and she could feel its chill on her skin. Not until she wished Lady Lillian goodbye on the verandah did she shake it off.

"Do have a marvellous trip," she said,"I think I envy you."

The boy held Harpoon while she mounted, Hero whining, eager to be gone.

"Goodbye," Lady Lillian called, waving.

The wind dropped as they started down the hill and realizing it was later than she had thought Angelique let

Harpoon trot as soon as they reached level ground. All that remained of the sun were sheaves of gold dust streaming between palms on the hill opposite, and when she dipped into the banana grove darkness dropped like a net. No workmen wandered the trail at this hour and Angelique sank deep into contented thoughtlessness.

It was disconcerting to emerge at Brougham Hall and find it still light. She heard Leland's voice and Hero galloped toward it, ears back in greeting. Suddenly he stopped, dropped his head and, tail tucked abjectly between his legs, turned and disappeared into the shrubbery. Angelique watched, wondering, then saw Leland coming over the brow of the lawn with the Tsui Suis cavorting at his heels.

"I take the horse, Mum," said the stable boy who appeared at Harpoon's head.

Still watching her husband Angelique jumped lightly to the ground and walked toward him. "I do wish you would not bring those dogs down to the house, Leland, it hurts Hero so."

"Nonsense. Watch how smart the little devils are. Sit, Tiger. Sit, Lion."

Angelique turned away. She might have known he wouldn't understand. As she went to the house she heard Leland giving commands, praising, never conscious of the

grieving eyes that watched from some hidden place.

"I must change for dinner, then we will eat," she told Naomi and went to her room. She took a long time because it was habit and because the very action of dressing was pleasant to her.And when she was finished she was pleased with what she saw in the mirror.

Debussy's music strayed through the rooms as Leland and Angelique helped themselves from the many dishes Naomi served. They spoke little and the meal was punctuated by the bell Angelique rang for each course. A fire crackled in the hearth, for it grew cold after nightfall, and wood furnishings glowed richly in the soft light.

Dessert finished Leland excused himself and in a short time Angelique heard the MG roar down the drive. The sound dominated the music and then left peace. She wandered into the drawing room and changed records, then called to Hero through the open door but he didn't come.

Angelique sat in the tapestry covered chair and lay her head back. Two more days, she thought, how will I ever get through them.

CHAPTER V

Leland came to breakfast wearing the Bermuda shorts that made him bulge like an oversized baby. As he helped himself heartily to kippers and scrambled egg Angelique avoided looking at him and asked, "Will you tell Roosevelt to bring down the landrover at ten."

"Where are you going?"

"Whiskey Cove."

He grunted and turned the page of his week old Times, dipping a corner into his coffee then fussing with his napkin to dry it.

"Also will you tell Miss Martin to make me a hair and manicure appointment for this afternoon."

"All right," he said.

Angelique jotted two more items on her list:

Tell Tobe to polish and check Peter's saddle.

Have roses trimmed - tidy under Casuarina trees.

Leland stretched, taking his glasses from his nose and rubbing the two red disks left by the cushions. He inspected a scratch on his wrist. It looked sore and inflamed. A clicking sound came from his throat - a habit he had never noticed and which irritated Angelique every

time she heard it.

She shifted her feet and wrote: Find Peter's sun hat.

Leland sighed thickly, stroked his thumb over the scratch, folded the paper beside his plate and, shaking a cigarette from its package, headed toward the office.

A terrible squabbling and shouting came from the kitchen. Angelique hurried to the door and when Cook and the stable boy saw her they stopped their argument and faced her like sulky children.

"What noise!" Angelique said. "What be the trouble?"

"The boy, he trouble me day after day, Mum." Cook's hands were clenched around her broom handle.

"What does he do?"

Tobe's eyes rolled up at Angelique from under the brimless crown of one of Leland's old hats. He spoke before Cook could gather words. "I eat my lunch, Mum, on the steps here. It warm in the sun and sometimes Naomi talk to me. She," he jabbed a thumb toward Cook, " say I in the way. Think she own all things."

"Is that right, Cook?"

"Them my steps, Mum. I not want the boy tripping me up and spilling crumbs."

"Now, Cook, you a good lady. If Tobe say he sit to one side and be careful not to spill you not mind I know." Angelique had, as usual, fallen into the simple sentence

structure of the islanders as she spoke to them. "Is that good with you Tobe?"

"Yes, Mum." The brown eyes looked doubtful.

"Cook?"

"Yes, Mum. But he not behave I beat him with my broom. You watch, boy."

Angelique left them. "Just remember they are children," Mr. Landy had told her long ago. "Proud, sometimes feisty children. They respect you. Speak calmly in words they understand, with authority and reason so no one's pride is hurt. Then you will have a peaceful house." It had been a good and useful lesson.

Angelique changed from morning gown to tan skirt and white blouse, cinching a leather belt around her slim waist. She folded her hair softly at the nape of her neck and tied a scarf over it, touched up her lipstick and changed the small diamond earrings for gold. After creaming her hands, finger by finger, she slid her feet into sandals, picked up her driving gloves and went to the landrover.

She drove swiftly, sounding her horn to move slower vehicles and pedestrians from her path. As she entered the village closest to Brougham Hall, called Pickney, she found the way blocked by men and women who clustered around a van parked in the middle of the street. From its sun roof protruded the upper half of a black man in a red open

necked shirt. He shouted through a megaphone and though his words were distorted and almost impossible to understand, his rhythm and enthusiasm captured the audience who chanted and cheered him on. Impatiently Angelique forced her way, the crowd opening reluctantly, closing quickly behind her. It was hot and noisy and she smelled the sweat of the people.

She caught the words "white rule" and "our island" and they sent slivers of ice down her spine. Music blared, loud and raucous, demanding and militant. In the thickest of the throng she felt trapped, then she saw the sullen face and mocking eyes of Luther. Damn him, damn them all! Jamming her palm down on the horn she drove steadily, challenging the music, pushing bodies from her path until at last she was free, feeling wind dry the perspiration from her forehead. Her hands relaxed and she licked the dryness from her lips.

There was no sign of unrest in the other villages she passed. It's the excitement that catches them, she told herself, it means nothing, the incitors have no real power.

Passing a cluster of shops, shoddier than most, though guide books called them picturesque, she skirted a tour bus that had just unloaded its cargo of tourists. Women in shorts and haltar tops wandered, exclaiming noisily, beside pink, loud-shirted husbands. No wonder the natives were

losing respect.

Bamboo lined the road and there was little traffic. Angelique hummed the catchy ragu tune that had roared over the loudspeaker earlier, and swung off the tarred road, rattling across a cattle guard, onto a dirt one. Dust rose like white smoke obliterating the world behind her and the land opened into unfenced pasture. Creamy Indian cattle grazed and chewed their cuds and watched her, flicking big ears and shivering flies from their humps. She imagined this to be like the African veldt and it gave her a feeling of freedom and excitement. The hot wind, the dust, the spaciousness, made her small yet powerful in herself, important and at the same time insignificant. A bird caught in a gale but taken in the direction it wants to go. The engine roared faster, faster.

The road dipped, trees clustered and she slowed, bumping down a track that ended on a cliff overlooking a small secluded cove. Leaving the car Angelique followed the narrow footpath to the beach house, a shingled building of rough wood consisting of one large tile floored room with a deal table and chairs, and two small changing rooms. With a critical eye Angelique checked for dust or cobwebs, then opened the ice-box. New ice and soft drinks. Fresh towels in the cupboard. Good. Briskly she walked down to the white sand beach riffled with the pattern of yester-

day's brooms. Sea breezes brushed discomfort from the late morning sun and the only sound was that of wavelets licking the shore like an old cat drinking milk. A swim would be so welcome. Angelique stood in the velvety cavern of shade formed by leaning palms and looked out to the promentory of rocks that reached like a beckoning arm into the bay: a series of cool rooms that led to the last flat rock perfect to sunbathe on and dive from. The water shivered clean and clear over sand, darker where coral lay beneath. No, there was not time, she must get back.

Her hair appointment was confirmed for three o clock and after a quick lunch Angelique changed into a cool blue dress with a flowing scarf at its neck. Smoothing her white gloves she went to the Mercedes Roosevelt had waiting.

When he had first come to Brougham Hall the chauffeur had been extremely proud of each of the cars. With the years he had developed a class structure, finding the landrover and stationwagon only worthy of minimal attention while he fussed over, even talked to the others. The Rolls he polished with his own breath. Now he dusted the Mercedes door handle after closing it behind Angelique.

She drove down toward the coast. Most of the traffic here was tourist oriented and brash new hotels rose like

shark's teeth along the water front biting into the island's beauty. Angelique's heart sank to see new foundations where only a few weeks before there had been rolling fields. Stone walls lined the road that sometimes pressed close to the sea's edge, sometimes drifted half a mile inland. Soon they would be knocked down to make room for a super highway she supposed. Oh well, at least the tourist trade had brought decent hairdressers, and she turned down a long drive to one of the older hotels. The doorman took her car and soon she was in James of London's with James himself pampering her hair and a girl working on her hands.

When she left Angelique looked no different. She never allowed herself to appear one jot less than perfect. Perhaps it was her constant poise that made the breeze that ruffled others seem to leave her untouched. Now, as usual when she opened the door to the patio leading from the lobby, tourists looked up and wondered who she was.

"Angelique!" A hand waved from a far table and she went toward it, joining Jane Downey, wife of the largest pimento grower on the island. "Sit down do. Paul had some business to see to and left me here till he finishes. I bought the most charming dress at that new little shop in the arcade. Did you notice it as you came in? All Italian imports. And these beads, junk I know, but fun don't you think? Paul likes this sort of thing."

Paul and Jane had been lovers for years and though when at home Jane was a quiet, dutiful wife and mother, as soon as she was with Paul she changed to a coy and frivolous girl.

Angelique sipped a Tom Collins and admired her hands on the frosty glass. Her companion's babbling mingled with conversations from other tables, splashing sounded from the pool and a motor boat chugged out at sea.

"Will Peter be home soon?"

Angelique looked up. "Day after tomorrow." She smiled and repeated herself. "Day after tomorrow."

"How long will he be here?" You must bring him over. The dear boy always liked our place. Remember how he used to swing on the rope hung from the mahogany tree? I expect he's too old for that though. Time does fly - before you know it he'll be married and raising his own family."

"No!" The word shot out denying the panic Jane's words brought. Ever since that first time she had kissed the tear stained face of her little son goodbye and sent him off to school not to return for nine months, deep in her subconscious Angelique had promised herself that one day it would be over and he would be home for good. Then they would get to know each other and she could be a mother, hearing his problems, helping him grow. What bliss to suffer this annual gestation no more! Sometimes though,

like now, someone would say something that was like a finger probing a knowlege that must not be awakened. "Oh, is that not Paul coming?" Gratefully she recognised the questionmark figure of the tanned, white haired man Jane saw as handsome.

The plump woman's eyes lit up as he came close and, holding hands, they sat side by side. What undignified foolishness, Angelique thought, and excusing herself, left.

She didn't know what time Leland came to bed that night, she was weary and fell asleep early over a book. Once, half awake, she thought she heard Hero howling but it might have been the wind through the jalousies.

Next day everything she did was with thought to Peter's arrival and much to the maid's consternation she made his bed herself, smoothing it carefully and plumping his pillow. She set the teddybear on top with a fresh ribbon around its neck.

Cara was ordered to air the clothes in his cupboard again and Tobe lunged the horses so they wouldn't be too fresh when Peter wanted to ride. Angelique checked the kitchen to make sure Cook had bought everything on the list and Naomi was sent to fill every vase with fresh flowers.

"It looks like you're expecting royalty," said Leland at dinner looking around at the massed bouquets.

"Peter comes home tomorrow," said Angelique.

"I know but a boy doesn't care about all this. It looks like a funeral."

Angelique refused to have her joy dampened. Leland didn't love Peter as she did.

"Do not forget we meet him at the plane tomorrow," she said later as she left the table to take a last look around his room. She couldn't remember if she had put his slippers out or not.

"Why would I forget?" Leland asked, unheard, to her back.

CHAPTER VI

The sun burst forth in a blaze of celebration, painting the hills and exciting birds to fling themselves through its rays with joyous outpourings of song. Angelique watched from her window, heart jumping, fingers smoothing, straightening, rearranging the scarf at her neck. She moved to all outward appearances unhurriedly into the morning, but beneath this facade her every nerve strained toward a distant silver plane.

At last she and Leland stood side by side in the small otherwise empty V.I.P. airport lounge. In the general waiting room below sunburned tourists milled and chattered, laden with fins, snorkels, straw hats and cameras. Leland's face was stony with distaste, he had wanted to stay in the car until the plane came but Angelique insisted on going inside. Now for fifteen minutes they had looked out over the airstrip ignoring the noise and bustle, saying nothing to each other.

"I'm getting a drink - want one?" asked Leland.

"Oh. Yes, please. Anything."

It seemed no time before he was thrusting a cold glass into her hand. Automatically Angelique wiped the rim with a lace hankie and sipped, eyes always searching for a flaw in the perfect sky. How brave Peter was to fly alone. Even as the smallest child he had never been afraid - not of anything. He'd learned to climb for coconuts just like one of the native boys, ridden big horses long before he had outgrown his pony, and swum beyond the reef with his snorkel, diving and spearing fish by the time he was ten. Angelique had been afraid of sharks and of the more irritable barracuda but Peter had laughed at her and survived. An impetuous boy, he had once darted into the middle of a busy Royaltown street to save a stray puppy. As her pride in him welled Angelique remembered the words of the woman at Tregaron's party. How could anyone think she didn't care!

A smudge appeared. Angelique held her breath as it became a plane. Its roar enveloped the building causing a surge of activity among the waiting travellers. Like a gleaming toy it set down at the far end of the runway and taxied toward the terminal. Steps were wheeled out, the door swung open and passengers began to disembark. Angelique's heart raced and her mouth was dry. Perhaps Peter wasn't here, had missed the plane or got his dates mixed. Men and women streamed down the steps and drifted

toward the door marked Customs. A couple of children, but not him. He wasn't there!

"There he is!" said Leland waving.

A tall figure waved back. Angelique's heart was stopped by a grin that took her back twenty years. She could neither breathe nor move as a young Leland came toward her then disappeared into another part of the building. Angelique put her hand to her throat, confused and lost in time.

"Are you all right?" Leland asked.

She nodded and wet her lips. In a short time Peter emerged from customs and as in a dream she kissed him and watched as he shook hands with his father. Was this man her little boy?

"Mother, you look fantastic!" he said. "I used to be afraid I'd come home and find you changed. Now I know I never will."

"But you Peter!" She tried to control her breath. "You have grown up. How did that happen? Goodness, how handsome you are! Come let us go home." The expected words and platitudes fell from her while inwardly she stood back afraid, touched by a dream and a memory.

Roosevelt put Peter's suitcase in the trunk of the Rolls and as they drove through the afternoon countryside, Angelique struggled to understand - last year he had been

a child.

As miles passed and she listened to the familiar words and expressions, in a voice she recognized even with its new depth, her strangeness eased and suddenly, with a rush of joy, she knew her son was home. Turning to him with a smile she began to ask questions. About school: Were his grades good? Had it been a difficult year? Was he on the soccar team? About life in England: How was Uncle Ben? Had it been a good hunting season? Why didn't he write longer letters? As Peter launched into enthusiastic replies everything was as it should be.

Dinner was a delight with Naomi one beaming smile as Peter praised the food and ate everything within sight. Angelique was pleased to see he hadn't forgotten the manners she had taught him and could hardly eat for the pleasure of watching him.

"I've taken a summer job in a sporting goods shop." He said it in the middle of the baked banana dessert, then looked at them both nervously.

"A summer job?" Angelique repeated. "In England?"

"London. I didn't think you and Dad would mind. All the chaps are working, it's the thing to do and you'll have had enough of me after two weeks."

"Two weeks?" There was nothing in the world but those two words and a great abyss. "We did expect you

for the summer." She daren't raise her eyes. "But of course, Peter, if that is what you want."

"Fine, son, good for a lad your age to learn responsibility." Leland spoke cheerfully.

He doesn't mind at all, thought Angelique, and wondered what to do with the rest of her dessert.

"Anything you'd especially like while you are home?" Leland asked. "I know you mother's been planning things. We'll throw a party, eh? Invite everyone and show you off a bit!"

Leland is probably pleased the boy is leaving early. Won't have to curtail his visits to lady friends for so long. It had been an unspoken agreement that Leland would behave while their son was home. She looked up to find Peter looking at her.

"You do understand, Mother, don't you? Everyone has a job this summer and there's such a lot going on over there. Of course I love being with you two..."

He knows how I feel, Angelique thought, he was always a sensitive child. She couldn't bear the distress in his eyes and forced a smile. "Of course it is all right. We understand."

"Expect there's a young lady back there too, eh son?" Leland blurted with a wink.

"Well, yes... there is a girl." Peter blushed.

A cold knot of astonishment blocked Angelique's throat. Her fledgling had grown and flown away without her ever knowing it.

"Come, Son," Leland pushed his chair back, "Let's take a stroll around the garden before it gets dark. I have two interesting dogs you must see. Rare breed."

Hero who had lain close to Leland's chair jumped up to follow, then seeing the direction the men took, stopped. Peter called once, then Leland said something about "being jealous," laughed, and they went on.

The big dog came back and stood next to Angelique who stared through the open door after the two shapes now almost swallowed in darkness. "Oh Peter," she whispered, "Oh Peter." She would not try to make him stay, he was grown now whether she liked it or not and must make his own decisions. She would enjoy whatever time she had with him and think no further. Strange, he was taller than his father, over six feet. Was he really the little boy she had loved and worried about all those years? Such a shock when she had first seen him ... a ghost from the past.

She rose from the table and walked down the hall to his room. She put her hand on the clasp of his suitcase beside the bed then took it away. He would want to unpack for himself this time. She looked at the teddy bear sitting bright-eyed on the pillow, picked it up and stood stroking

its replaced ear. She meant to take it away but instead placed it on the back of the dresser behind the vase of roses.

Naomi had the fire crackling in the living room and Angelique sat in front of it waiting, looking into the flames. She heard voices long before the men arrived and soon they were all comfortably discussing the past year.

"This calls for a drink of my best wine," Leland said ringing for the maid.

Just in time Angelique stopped herself from telling him to make it a small one for Peter. It would take a while ... As they talked she watched the light gleam along the strong lean planes of her son's face, studied the square jaw and wide vulnerable mouth. His hair, thick blond and uncontrollable, danced over his forehead as he talked and his dark eyes when they weren't laughing seemed to burn with questions. Angelique filled with an immense tenderness. Oh but it was good to have him home!

"I thought we might go into Royaltown tomorrow and buy you a few clothes. We could look at the new excavations." she said.

"Sure, that'd be great. There's so much I want to do. Go to Whiskey Cove, ride and swim."

"We'll do them all," Angelique promised.

Leland offered Peter a cigarette.

"No thanks, Dad, I hate the smell of the things."

Leland looked at the package then put it away without taking one himself. "I'll come with you tomorrow. Have business at the bank anyway. We'll eat at the Clam Digger. New spot, very nice."

"I think we should all go to bed. You must be tired, Peter." Angelique stood and rested her hand on his shoulder. "Good night, sleep well." She went to her room.

Leland already snored when she came out of her bathroom glowing from a hot and delicately scented tub. Hesitantly she went to the hall and listened. All was quiet. She tiptoed along to Peter's door. It was unlatched but the light was out. With a sigh she began to turn away then heard a soft voice. "Mother? Mother?"

Pushing the door open she went in.

"Weren't you going to wish me good night?" The voice from the bed was was low and wistful. "You always used to on the first night I came home, and the last night. Remember?"

"I had not forgotten. I was afraid you were too old for such things."

"I'm not. Sit next to me."

Angelique sat on the edge of the bed and looked down at his face, so young in the darkness. Years rolled back and he was her little boy again. She stroked his forehead

pushing back the unruly hair. "Has it been a good year, Darling?"

This was the time he told his secrets, things his father wouldnnever know.

"Pretty good. I'm not spending any more vacations at Uncle Ben's though. He drinks too much and Aunt Hanna's always whining. My friend David says I can stay with him. His folks have a big estate in Wiltshire. I figure they're posh enough for dad not to complain. Do you think it'll be all right?"

"I think it will be fine."

"I wish you lived in England."

"When you come home to run Brougham Hall we will all be together. It will not be long."

"Oh, mother, that bothers me so. I love the island but I could never live here. I need to live where things are happening. I've decided to be an architect, design buildings that fit the land not the monstrosities I see going up everywhere. Men here get fat and drink too much." Embarrassment hung in the air. ~~and~~ She knew he didn't mean to critisize his father, but it was true.

"Father will be terribly disappointed but I do not think he need know for some years yet. He wants you to go to college so we will just not speak of it, all right?" Don't think, she told herself, this moment is all that

matters. He will change. He will come home. "Tell me about your girlfriend."

"Well, her name's Susan and she's David's sister. She has a terrific sense of humor, long brown hair and rides show jumpers."

"Ah yes, you mentioned in you letters going to horse shows. Does she win?"

"Very often. I wish she could meet you."

"I wish I could meet her. Now I think we had better get some sleep." Leaning forward she kissed his cheek. "Good night, darling."

How wonderful it was to have someone to love again!

CHAPTER VII

The same birds sang as last week and the same sun shone but everything was different. The whole rhythm of the house was faster, charged with energy. Angelique, lying in bed, smiled to hear her son's voice, then a memory darkened her thoughts - only two weeks. No! She had resolved not to think of it and she would not.

After showering and dressing she went onto the lawn and stood unnoticed, watching Peter tussle with Hero. He wore only a pair of raggedly cut-off jeans and she saw how strong were the muscles across his shoulders and back, how sinewy his legs, and his feet so solid on the dewy grass. It didn't seem possible... The boy looked up and saw her. Waving, he pushed the dog away, feinted to one side as it charged back at him, and ran toward her flushed and laughing, Hero leaping and barking beside him.

"Hero sure loves a good game," Peter grinned.

"Poor fellow has not had much fun lately, I worry about him. Now," she hooked her arm through his, "let us eat."

They sat at the patio table and Angelique, stirred from her habitual calm, joined her son's exhuberance as

he spoke of little things that concerned him. Things people who have been separated get to after the main topics have been discussed. The conservation group he had joined, the row with a teacher at school. He had a knack of looking at the humorous side and soon had Angelique laughing while Hero looked from one to the other, tail leaping in spasms of thumping.

Leland joined them. "Goodness, Angela, it's a long time since I heard you laugh like that. After breakfast I just want to see the men are working then we'll leave, all right?"

"I'll go dress," said Peter.

Angelique made him sit in the front seat of the Bently with his father. That way he could see better and, reclining against soft leather in the rear, she could watch him.

He was interested in everything, exclaiming, asking questions, pointing out changes. He made her see this drive she always enjoyed, with fresh eyes, made the climb over the mountains an adventure.

"I'll go about my business and meet you back at the car in two hours," Leland said as he parked in a Royaltown street.

Peter would have been content just to wander, looking

at people, absorbing the atmosphere he had known and loved since childhood, but after several blocks Angelique touched his shirt sleeve. "We must do our shopping."

They entered the city's one large department store and were amused when a salesgirl wouldn't believe they were mother and son.

"You look to young, Mother," he teased.

"You look too old," she returned.

Angelique enjoyed buying him things.

"I don't need so many shirts," he remonstrated as she insisted on buying a fifth.

"Nonsense, darling, let me have my fun," she said and they went on, from shop to shop with Peter trying clothes and modeling them for her. Sometimes, when he appeared in something completely ridiculous, Angelique could not stop from breaking into gales of laughter. Dabbing tears from her eyes she checked her mascara in a mirror and wondered what had come over her, she felt quite tipsy.

"That's it," Peter said at last. "I shan't try one more thing, I feel as though I'd spent an hour doing semaphore. Now you come with me."

Taking his mother's hand firmly in his he led her to a counter of silk scarves and picked out one the color of hot coals mingled with gold. "This is to go with the glints in your beautiful eyes, my mother," he said tying

it gently around her neck.

Angelique was suddenly shy. Sometimes Peter was her little boy, then all at once he was a man. It confused her. After paying the clerk they left the store and Angelique struggled with a lump in her throat. She put on dark glasses. What a fool I am she told herself, just because someone I care about said something nice and brought me a present. But the feelings stayed with her and her carefully nurtured independance gave way before this tall gentle son.

They met Leland and went to the Clam Digger, a rustic, expensive restaurant at the end of a decaying pier. Although it was crowded Leland arranged for them to be quickly seated by a window and they watched a cruise ship cast off and head for open sea, leaving streamers like colored snakes in the water. For once Angelique had no yearning to be on board.

The three of them chatted, with several interruptions as Leland greeted acquaintances. He was in a loud expansive mood and no one in the restaurant could escape knowing he was there. Angelique felt herself becoming tight inside, worried that Peter would be embarrassed for his father. It became almost unbearable when the waiter arrived with the entrée. Leland cut into his steak and pushed it away. "I ask for rare and what do they give me - bloody raw!

Waiter!" His bellow made every head swivel. "Take this back and cook it. I'm not a cannibal."

"Yes, sir." The offending portion was rushed to the kitchen.

Leland was now in full cry. "Where's that wine I ordered?" He turned to Peter. "Got to keep 'em in line son, insist on getting what you ordered, keep 'em on their toes."

Angelique sat stiff and disapproving, affronted by the commotion.

The waiter appeared with wine and poured a taste in the Colonel's glass. The whole room seemed to await the verdict as he sipped.

"Corked," he said, "Definately corked."

He was not usually as bad as this. It was almost as though he were showing off for the boy. She dared a glance to judge Peter's reaction and was suprised to see laughter sparking in his blue-black eyes. The spark seemed to catch light to something deep inside her and when Peter caught her eye they had trouble not laughing aloud as Leland continued to noisily organize his meal.

"What's so funny?" He suddenly snapped.

Peter gave his father one of the wide carefree grins that had melted Angelique's heart since he was a child. "You must admit, Dad, all that bellowing over a bit of dinner

is funny."

Angelique sat motionless, afraid of what Leland would say. She watched his face redden, then he looked down and began to eat. He said nothing for the remainder of the meal while Angelique and Peter laughed and talked, almost forgetting he was there.

The ruins they walked through that afternoon were a scruffy lot of half unearthed rocks to Angelique but Peter seemed intrigued and she was impressed by his knowlege as he explained them to her. Leland after a few efforts at showing he too knew a little about archeology, trailed perspiring, behind them.

"Let's have a drink," he said finally, easing his tie away from his neck.

They went to the shabby booth in a corner of the field and ordered soft drinks. Peter found a glass for Angelique and she was grateful for his thoughtfulness. The heat, now oppressive, made them glad to return to the car, turn on the air-conditioning and head for home.

An air letter waited among other mail on the hall table. Peter snatched it up and put it in his pocket.

"From the girl friend, eh?" His father laughed. "If you need any advice just ask me."

Angelique felt her son's discomfort. "Come Peter,

as soon as you put away your packages and wash it will be dinner time."

After they'd eaten he went to bed, saying he was tired, not used to the heat yet, but Angelique knew he left them to write to his girl and the knowlege brought an unfamiliar stab of jealousy.

"Can we ride up to the old mill today?" Peter asked at breakfast next morning.

"Certainly." Angelique turned to Naomi, "Tell Cook to pack a picnic for two, to carry horseback. You will not want to come will you Leland? We could borrow a horse from Mr. Landy, I am sure."

"No, no. I have work to see to. Got to get those bananas picked. Thought you might like to stay with me, Peter. Watch how I do things, but that's all right, you go with your mother."

Angelique was happy. This was part of her and Peter's holiday tradition, visiting the old sugar mill, and she wanted it to be just the two of them.

Peter sat the chestnut easily as it played on the way up the drive, shaking its head, snorting and pretending to see ghosts. Angelique watched the flaunting tail ahead of her and wondered if these horses ever missed their days

of competition, the galloping mile upon mile over big fences, the applause after a clear round in the ring. Now, reaching the orchard above the house, they let them canter, snatching at their snaffles, pleading for more rein. The grassy track swooped up and down small hills and valleys to where turf gave over to stones and they steadied to a walk.

Parrots squawked and preened in the brush nearby. Peter reined in so Angelique could come alongside. "Look," he whispered, pointing to an irridescent green humming bird that hung in space, dipping its ruby bill into a blossom. "That's a Search-me-heart flower. Remember?"

She thought back to many years before when they had been riding this same trail and a black woman had come the other way leading an overloaded donkey. The load had been slipping and Peter, a precocious child of ten, had put it right for the woman. In return she had smiled toothlessly and given him a flower saying something Angelique hadn't been able to catch.

After the woman had gone Peter gave the flower to his mother and she asked what had been said to him.

"The lady told me this flower is called Search-me-heart and if I want to grow up wise and happy I must remember its name and live by it."

As they had ridden on Angelique wondered that Peter

had not asked what was meant, nor commented in any way. Funny creatures children. She now nodded to this grown Peter. "Yes, I remember," she said.

They trotted through slashes of sun sliced by the criscross of slender coconut palms. The trail grew steep then burst onto a promontory overlooking sweeping hills that tumbled richly green toward distant sea. Fresh trade winds lifted the horse's manes.

"Beautiful," murmured Peter. "If it was just this and not all the rest of living here I would stay. Do you love the island, Mother?"

Angelique paused, knowing that for years she had allowed herself to love nothing but her son, and yet there were moments, when she was off guard, that the island had crept into her heart. When she was, as Peter called it, away from all the rest of it. "Sometimes," she said. "Yes, sometimes."

They stood soft in thought.

"Thirsty?" Peter asked suddenly.

Angelique nodded and smiled, wondering if their little game would work. She watched Peter cup his hands around his mouth and shout, "Say Mon! Fetch me watah coconut!"

They waited, listening to the silence. Without warning a barefoot native wearing ragged shirt and shorts ran from the trees carrying two green coconuts. Angelique let

out a breath of relief. Nothing was changed. Peter slapped his knee with delight. The man sliced off the tops with his machete and, grinning, handed a nut to each of them, then disappeared back into the jungle.

Angelique and Peter took a long drink, [redacted] looked at each other and laughed. Once when Peter was small and his parents warned him about going off too far alone, the boy had argued for his freedom saying that wherever he was there was always someone nearby if he needed them. He had proved it too, time and again in the most unlikely places until it had become a family joke.

His eyes grew serious. "There've been things in the papers lately, about a rebellion. That it may be dangerous for the whites here ..."

"Oh, Peter, what foolish talk." Already in the British papers? Perhaps it was serious. "Could you imagine Naomi or Cara, or pompous Roosevelt taking over Brougham Hall? I think the papers are making up news to print."

"Are you sure? I don't want anything to happen to you."

"Foolishness. All foolishness." She watched belief grow in his eyes. "Come." She wheeled Harpoon and they cantered along the rim of the hill to plunge from sunlight into dense jungle. It was a lush blue-green underwater world where orchids trailed from trees and vines hung like heavy seaweed. The path was only just decernable among

tangled ferns and they rode in silence, a pair of fleeting shadows. Somewhere a croaker made its clicking sound and tree lizards skittered, small flashes of movement. The air hung heavy and sweet.

After crossing a gully that cascaded white water the trail dissolved in a clearing that years before had been a field. Now it was returning to jungle. Peter and Angelique tied the horses to a pair of breadfruit trees and walked toward the stone ruin of the sugar mill that rose half lost in a web of greenery, stubbornly battling the stranglehold of vines that relentlessly dug into crevices, pulling toward the ground. They entered the gaping doorway. The rooms were high and hollow with more sky than slate for roof. Small withered shapes of sleeping bats hung in dark corners and with a whoosh of wings an owl fled their presence.

As they had done so many times before, Peter and Angelique traced out the bailing house, the distillery and the stone columned trash house, marking changes, discovering it all anew though the magic of their very first discovery remained a subtle flavor. All the echoes and silent ghosts were still there. As they explored, false night crept in and gaps in the roof became gray. Birds fell quiet and Angelique became conscious of a gentle tapping. Suddenly it became a roar as rain drowned sound and light and scent.

"I'll get the sandwiches before they're soaked."

Before she could stop him Peter had run outside toward the horses who stood backs hunched, two miserable blots in the slashing storm.

Angelique strained to see but there was nothing but water. All at once she was afraid. Not of the place but of the feeling of abandonment that rushed in at her. Before it became overpowering Peter was back, hair dripping, eyes laughing.

"Oh you foolish one," she said pulling a napkin from the satchel he carried. "Here, dry your hair and face at least. You will catch a chill."

"It's warm, Mother, I'll dry in no time."

"Sit in this doorway out of the drips."

They sat opposite each other, eating, backs against the warm-tinted limestone.

"I wish you'd come to England," Peter said after a long contented silence. "Couldn't you leave father here and just come for a vacation? Let me show you around? We could have a terrific time together."

"How I wish I could, Peter. But you know father." Leaning forward Angelique rested one hand along his cheek and looking into his eyes smiled. "Perhaps someday..." Something inside her trembled and she dropped her gaze to a patch of light beside his shoulder. "Look, the storm is over!"

They stood up and faced a slick, steaming world, so bright and shining it made them half close their eyes. Birds were loud, fluttering from tree to tree and the horses stood with smoking backs, shaking droplets from their manes.

Angelique gathered the sandwich wrappers and they left the building that now felt cold. Peter tossed crumbs to the bright-eyed molasses birds that pecked tamely about their feet and they wandered through the clearing thrilled to find the gnarled orange tree still flowering in the north corner, the wooden door now completely overgrown, the shovel almost rusted away. They rejoiced over each landmark, checking for change and mentally noting it for next time, a promise they would be back.

The sun burned down and a bee flew heavily, legs yellow with pollen.

"Well, did you enjoy yourselves?" asked Leland meeting them at the stable.

"It's one of my favorite places," said Peter unsaddling his horse before Tobe could get to it.

"There's a letter from your girl at the house."

Peter gave the chestnut's reins to the boy and hurried up the path.

"Good days cutting," said Leland, walking beside

Angelique. "I think we'll get done in time."

I wonder if she's pretty, thought Angelique watching Peter run away from her.

CHAPTER VIII

They swam and rode and walked. Talked of serious things and laughed, filling the sunny summer days.

The morning they went to market Angelique watched with pride and amusement while Peter haggled with the women over yams, calalu, mangoe, and the squash called cho-cho. When she saw him buying a stem of bananas she called to him. "Peter, whatever are you doing? We have acres of our own!"

"Oh but Mother, this old woman's so marvellous, I just must bargain with her!"

Laughing and shaking her head Angelique stepped back and the native women within hearing laughed with her. Suddenly she loved everyone. All these beaming buxom black women, the noise, the heat, the smells, the good-hearted turmoil, the color. She loved all of it including the scraggly palm in the middle of the market place. But most of all she loved the young man who now bought a foot of Jackass rope she prayed he'd never dare to smoke.

Smiling broadly, arms overflowing, he came toward her and they carried his booty to the station wagon.

"Wow that's fun," he said, "But hot! Whew! Let's

find something to drink."

Angelique looked doubtfully up the street. "I do not think there is anywhere ..."

"There must be. Come on." Peter led the way along the wooden sidewalk in front of small dark shops. He stopped outside a shack with "Cafe" painted over the door.

"We cannot go in there," said Angelique.

"Why not? Where's your spirit of adventure?"

She was suprised at how clean it was inside, even though their table had one leg shorter than the others. And it was cool. The Coca-Cola went down easily and the solid little pieces of strange yellow cake Peter insisted on getting were really quite good.

The few other customers looked at them curiously at first then forgot them. When they were almost ready to leave a different noise to the usual market day sounds invaded the room.

"What's going on outside?" asked Peter of the proprietor who came with the check.

"It nothing." The man evaded their eyes.

Angelique noticed the other tables were now empty. Peter paid and an uneasiness crept over her as they went to the door.

"Something is going on out there," said Peter, eagerly pushing through the beaded curtain onto the street.

Angelique's eyes went straight to the van with the loud speaker and gesticulating black man protruding through its roof. She shivered. As before a crowd gathered and participated with clapping and occasional cheers. She recognised some of the women she had laughed with earlier but they had a different expression on their faces now. Angry and eager like hungry chickens.

"Let's go close so we can hear what he says," said Peter.

"No!" The urgency in Angelique's voice stopped him. "I think we should get the vegetables home before they wilt." Peter must not find out what this was about. There was no need for him to be hurt, he loved the island and its people too much. He must build only pleasant memories these two weeks. "It is just some electioneering. You know how excited they get."

"The vegetables can wait a moment. These things are such fun."

"Hello Mrs. Brougham! Hello Peter!"

Angelique spun toward the welcome interruption of Mr. Landy.

"My it's fine to see you home, mon," he said clasping Peter's hand. He stood back. "I wouldn't recognise you, mercy me!"

"It's sure good to see you, Mr. Landy. How's the

property, and your cattle?"

"Come with me and see for yourself. You can tell me about your life over a cup of tea. Will you, Mrs. Brougham?" He turned from Peter to Angelique.

"That would be delightful," she said.

Mr. Landy had worked them away from the crowd, toward their station wagon. He held the door for Angelique while Peter went around to the other side. "Follow me. My jeep's over yonder."

When he had left Peter said, "But we just ate."

"We will tell him when we get there," said Angelique.

"No, maybe it would be best to say nothing, he enjoys having us. Besides I've room for more."

Angelique leaned forward and patted his knee. "You are right," she said. "Here he comes."

As they left the village she saw that the crowd had grown louder and wild music had begun but Peter seemed not to notice, being concerned with moving a banana stem that prodded him in the neck.

They followed Mr. Landy's jeep through peaceful countryside, turning in his gate and up a gravel track that undulated through fields toward a square, stone, three-story house. Its windows flashed and glowed in the lowering sun.

Mr. Landy ushered them inside with courtly, old-time courtesy and they sat in the same chairs as always in the

exquisitely furnished drawing room. He stood for a moment looking at them, face radiating pleasure. "I'll get tea," he said and disappeared.

Looking around Angelique could have sworn nothing had been touched since last time she was here though the wood glowed with polish and the yellow rose that graced the piano he had once asked her to play was obviously freshly picked.

Peter went to the window. "I like this house. It feels so honest and caring somehow."

Angelique left her chair to stand beside him and they watched the cream cattle quietly grazing.

"Why don't we have cattle?" he asked.

"I expect father thinks bananas are more profitable."

"I'd rather have cattle."

They watched the sky take on color. A heiffer stretched her neck and bellowed then swung her head around to lick her flank.

"I wonder if Mr. Landy's ever lonely, living here by himself?"

"He's always been alone. I expect he likes it."

"Strange he's never married. Perhaps he loved someone once and can never get over it. He has got a melancholy look in his eye."

"Romantic! No I think he is just a confirmed bachelor.

Look at that sunset!"

The sky blazed flame and gold, then the sun slipped behind the hills and darkness rushed in. Lights clicked on behind them and Mr. Landy set a silver tray on the Sheraton table. As was their long time custom, Angelique poured from the delicate Dresden tea pot into matching cups enjoying the simple ceremony, and even though it was only Mr. Landy she appreciated the admiration in his eyes as he watched her. Funny little man, she thought, and passing cakes on a silver plate wondered if he always kept some on hand for guests. Surely he must have very few visitors.

"Now Peter, tell me, how did your team play this year?" Mr. Landy listened with intense interest to Peter's reply then encouraged him to talk about other things.

How beautiful my boy looks, Angelique thought. How sensitive his lips and how proudly he carries his head. I love the strength in his hands , the straightness of his back and his voice like music. Has any woman ever had such a son?

She felt Mr. Landy watching her and caught a puzzled, thoughtful look in his eyes, then she turned back to Peter.

It was late when they crossed the yard to the station wagon and Angelique had a twinge of conscience to see the wilted shapes of vegetables in the rear.

"Come back soon," said Mr. Landy. "But perhaps you will not have time, Peter. Such a short vacation."

"I think it is good for him to take a job. He says everyone works these days." Angelique forced cheerfulness into her voice.

"Yes, it is a good thing. Goodbye Mrs. Brougham." His eyes through the darkness were full of sympathy.

Angelique turned the ignition and drove away. Why does he always know everything? Damn him!

In the closed vegetable smelling intimacy of the station wagon she clutched Peter's presence to her and wished time would stop.

Leland took one day away from the property to accompany them to Whiskey Cove and Angelique's happiness overflowed to include even him. They sat on the beach, talking, dozing, tossing pebbles in the water.

Angelique swam while Leland discussed the banana business with Peter. She went almost to the reef without stopping then lazily started back, changing strokes, floating. She could hear the drone of Leland's voice mixed with the water lapping at her ears and a seabird cried overhead, soared and wheeled away.

As her feet touched sand she took off her cap, feeling the neatness of her hair with her hands. She watched the

two men thoughtfully as she waded toward them. Leland flabby, belly hanging over swimtrunks, mouth slack and cheeks drooping. She remembered how his eyes were dull stones behind round circles of glass and how the smell of cigarettes and alchohol permanently fouled his breath. Then Peter ... slim with petal smooth skin under which long strong muscles slid. Eyes alive as a changing sky, and as untamed.

Reaching shore she picked up the lunch basket from the hut and took it with her. "Hungry?" she asked.

Leland took a sandwich. "When you having that party, Angela? Only a week left you know."

The wind was suddenly cold. "We are having no party," Angelique said trying to still the panic that rose in her. "There is no time to prepare. We will go to dinner and dancing at the hotel, you would like that better would you not, Peter?"

"Yes, I'm not much for parties," he said. "Let me pour you more lemonade, Mother."

Later, swimming, he cut his toe on a chunk of coral and Angelique insisted on cleaning it and putting on a band-aid. As she held his foot tenderness melted through her and she wanted desperately to say something to make him stay, never return to England. Words came to her lips but, with an effort she forced them back. "There, I

think you will live," she smiled, and gently put the foot down.

That evening when she checked Peter's room to see if Cara had turned his bed back she noticed two unopened letters from Susan lying on the dresser and realized that she had seen none waiting to be mailed out either, not for the last few days. A sudden lightness entered her step.

CHAPTER IX

Days passed, weaving themselves into a tapestry of joy for Angelique. Night was the only villain and she hated the darkness that separated her from her son, took up so much of their precious time together.

On a particularly hot afternoon Leland asked Peter to accompany him into Port Dolores.

"It'll be horribly hot," the boy said looking to Angelique for help.

"You used to like going there. Perhaps you will meet someone you know." She saw them to the car. A little time alone would allow her to get that letter written to her sister.

Immediately they had gone panic entered, gnawing and tearing at her and she knew she had made a mistake, thrown away priceless moments of their dwindling time. She couldn't write the letter, couldn't do anything, just watch the drive and listen for the car.

At last it came, the gentle throbbing of an engine and she ran to meet it. "You must be melting," she said to Peter as he climbed out. "Naomi has lemonade ready."

As they sat on the verandah she swore she would never let him out of her sight again during this vacation and she fought to keep from counting how much of it was left.

Leland stayed for a while then muttered something about the office and left them. She wondered if he bestowed more attention on Miss Martin during this time of abstinence from other admirers.

"Why did you make me go?" Peter was looking at her accusingly.

"I thought you would like it."

"I would rather stay here. We could have gone for a swim."

She smiled at the sulky tone. "Get you suit, we will swim now," she said and the world was all happiness again.

But the afternoon's separation had opened the flood gates of panic and desperation now rode every fleeting moment. Angelique often found herself reaching out to touch her son and she urged him to talk as if to fill every second with the sound of him.

Next day they drove up to Worlds End and swam in that pool because it was different, sitting on the grass afterward to look out to sea and discuss distant ships and other islands over the horizon.

"I must check to see everything is alright inside," Angelique said and they went up past the empty rocker and into the house. Peter enjoyed exploring the rooms and was intrigued with all the gadgets in the kitchen.

"Wow, it sure is modern. Seems a bit much just to cook for two old people doesn't it?" He opened the cupboards full of shiny pots and pans, fiddled with the dials on the stove. "Does their cook really know how to work this?"

"I doubt it," laughed Angelique. "The electricity is off or we could try it." Opening the back door she looked down at the whitewashed maid's quarters, glaring sunlight. "I think I should check down here also."

Peter close behind, she went down the steps and pushed open the sun-peeled door. Musty cement smells rushed to meet her, she saw the barren bed in the corner and Peter's shadow on the wall. Heard the man's voice speaking beside her. Dizziness came over her and her soul dissolved in desire for some forgotten sweetness. She reached to the wall for support.

"Mother, are you all right?"

The almost remembered memories slipped away. "How foolish. I felt suddenly faint."

With his arm to support her they went outside and sat on the step. "Here, rest your head on my shoulder,"

he said.

How peaceful and secure she felt. After a few moments she looked up and seeing the consternation in his face quickly stood. "There, I am better. How foolish of me, I must be getting old."

"Nonsense, you're too beautiful to ever grow old!"

The earnestness in his tone brought that strange shyness to her again, causing her to look away. Goodness, she wondered, whatever is wrong with me?

Going back through the house they checked all the windows and doors then went out to the landrover.

"Here, you drive," said Angelique, giving Peter the keys and on the way home she took pleasure in watching his hands so sure and capable on the wheel.

At Brougham Hall a note awaited her from Jane Downey, inviting them for lunch the next day.

The way was up country roads, over hills toward the center of the island. Angelique let Peter drive the Mercedes and as they wound through the last village he sniffed. "Smell that! Doesn't it bring back memories!"

"Pimento. It does smell delicious. I am glad Jane asked us. She mentioned it the other week when I met her in the hotel but I expected her to forget."

They turned up a rough track and dark pointy leaves

brushed the car with a dry rustling. It was a fragrant, long, twisty climb before they reached the stone house nestling half hidden among trees that continued on behind it.

Jane, in a floppy pink sunhat and face pinker than ever rushed toward them. "Darlings, I'm so thrilled you could come! Such a nuisance not having a phone. Peter you look absolutely marvellous!" Standing on tiptoe she kissed his cheek. "Goodness, I wouldn't have believed it, that rascally little boy who used to scare the wits out of me on that rope swing ... oh my! And you, Angela, having your boy home certainly seems to agree with you, you look like a girl, positively blooming. Come on, let's get out of the sun. How I wish my son would come home more often. He just lives the other side of the island but it's like pulling hen's teeth to get him here. Here have some lemonade while Tess gets lunch. Peter, tell me all about yourself, I hear you're off to college next. You know my Gerald decided to stay on the island but he's doing well, has a good job ..."

It was like being caught in a small hurricane as Jane babbled non-stop through a delicious tuna salad and jellied aspic. Angelique thought back to other times she had sat here watching two boys swing from the rope that still dangled from the mahogany tree, the same smell of

pimento flavoring everything.

"Everyone had enough?" Jane asked after Peter turned down a third piece of cake. "Let's go for a ride. I know you always enjoy seeing the property and I've had Jingo get the horses ready for us." Stepping to the edge of the verandah she clapped her hands.

Angelique flashed a glance at Peter. She had worn a skirt that morning but he had persuaded her to change into slacks. "You know Mrs. Downey, Mother, she's just as likely to take us hiking through that brush of theirs."

A young black boy with brown beret pulled down to just above huge astonished eyes came into view leading three unimpressive horses. I do wish Jane would get some decent animals, Angelique thought, it was quite embarassing to have to ride such beasts. Oh well, no one would see her thank goodness. She pulled on her gloves.

She had to admit after fifteen minutes of climbing the rocky trail behind the house that these native bred horses were more surefooted than her own thoroughbreds. She held her breath as the roan she rode clambered up some almost verticle shale.

Jane, in the lead, never stopped talking and her voice seemed no different than the birds that twittered in the trees.

Peter stopped beneath a branch and stood in his stirrups

to pick some fruit. "Star apples," he said giving one to his mother. "I sure miss them in England."

"I forget to eat them here," said Angelique, "although I do love them. It seems I need you to remind me of many things." She bit into the warm sweetness and automatically frowned to see a few specks stain her gloves. She noticed Jane still riding and talking, unconscious of their pause. "We had better hurry. I do hope she does not take us too far, it is terribly warm."

They pushed their reluctant horses into a shuffling trot and by the time they caught up Jane was lowering herself awkwardly to the ground. She turned to them puffing and rosy but with a childish gleefulness in her eyes. "Now for your treat, Peter." Deep from her chest the little woman brought out a call one wouldn't think possible and very soon a workman trotted into view. "Three jelly coconuts, please," Jane ordered, just as though she were in a shop.

The man loped to a tall tree and shinnied up like a monkey to return carrying three young nuts.

"You see, Peter, I remember your favorite sweet," Jane said as the man slashed them open to reveal the jelly lined interiors. From her pocket Jane took a packet and sprinkled coarse brown sugar thickly over each. "There you go!" She passed out spoons . "Let the horses go they'll

just graze."

Angelique sat on a log while the other two relaxed on grass. They talked and savored the sweetness in their mouths while the horses snorted and munched hearby.

Peter stopped eating to sniff the air. "I don't remember the pimento smelling this strong before," he said.

"Strong? I hadn't noticed..." Jane sniffed and got to her feet, face turning ashen. "Oh my God! Look!"

A plume of smoke strayed into the sky.

Without a word they mounted and, with Peter leading, clattered and slid back down the steep hillside as fast as the increasingly nervous horses could manage. the riders began to cough and their eyes tingled. As they pounded into the smoke-filled yard Jack Downey ran toward them. "Pimento's on fire! Can you drive a jeep?"

"I can," said Angelique. "Peter you stay and help."

"Good," said Mr. Downey urgently. "Fetch as many men as you can from the village and phone the fire department. Jane get drinks ready. Come Peter!"

Angelique saw the excitement in her son's face. "Be careful!" she called but he was already running after Mr. Downey into the smoke.

Jane took the horses to turn into the paddock and

Angelique started the jeep. She roared down the road as fast as she dared, imagining the flames behind her, skidding and sliding around sharp bends. It seemed endless but at last she reached hard pavement and pushed the accelerator to the floor, blasting the horn as she hurtled into the village. She jerked to a stop and ran into the bar. Black faces looked up from their drinks and she prayed the men weren't too drunk to help her.

"Mr. Downey's pimento afire. I have the jeep. Come." No one moved. "Phone the fire engine!" she demanded of the bartender.

Suddenly everyone was running and calling to others outside to join them. Angelique was smothered with the smell of sweat and alchohol as men climbed on to the jeep, clinging to every possible handhold. They joked, treating it all like a game, but she didn't mind, she had them.

She started off tearing back the way she had come. The weight of the men made the climb up the long private road a struggle for the churning engine and Angelique pushed her feet on the floorboards with all her strength as though to help. Suddenly it was dark and turning on the headlights she saw smoke swirling thickly in their beams.

Her passengers lept off before she braked in front of the house and when she looked behind she saw the welcome lights and shiny red and chrome body of the fire engine.

It streaked past and disappeared. Angelique stood alone and stared into the blackness. Her eyes watered and her lungs ached between spasms of coughing. Flame shot up illuminating the maimed silhouette of a tree that disappeared again into crackling secrecy.

Jane appeared beside her, face slack with weeping. "What will we do? Everything's ruined."

"Everything is not ruined," Angelique retorted impatiently. "We must do something to help. Are there more brooms we could find for the men to beat with?"

But Jane was incapable of anything but sobbing breathlessly and beating her hands against her breast. Angelique led her to the kitchen and poured them each a cup of coffee. It tasted the same as the smokey spiced air only wetter. Angelique hated staying in the house but whenever she made as though to leave Jane begged her not to. Their only news came from begrimed men who appeared at the door periodically for jugs of juice or water to take to the workers. "The firemen forgot to fill the truck with water so they beat with brooms like us," was one report.

Jane muttered ceaselessly about what to save from the house and did nothing. Someone said the fire was almost out, then that it was out of control and would surely burn the whole crop, house as well. I do hope

it does not get the mahogany tree, thought Angelique. Her car didn't seem to matter.

At last Jane fell asleep and after covering her with a blanket, Angelique went out into the thick night and wandered around the yard, trying to hear what muffled shouts meant and to guess where the main blaze was. No one had come from the fire for a long time it seemed and she imagined them all surrounded sin some hellish corner, Peter fighting for his life. If only she could do something!

Then they came, all the men she had brought from the village, in one dark, tired, scorched group.

"Master say you drive us home now. Fire almost done."

"Is the young white man all right?" Angelique asked.

"I not know," said one.

The others shrugged and clambered wearily onto the jeep.

This time it was a quiet drive down the hillside. Someone cracked a feeble joke followed by a high pitched laugh, otherwise noone spoke. Angelique wondered what Leland would say if he could see her now, surrounded by burly natives in the middle of the night. Be angry at my loss of dignity probably, she thought and smiled.

It wasn't until she had dropped the men in the village and started the drive back alone that she realized how

tired she was. Her arms and shoulders ached from wrestling the steering wheel and her head throbbed.

A small moon hung in a sky bright with stars. Nothing on earth seemed to stir but herself and a somnolent breeze that pretended to clear the smoke. At one point headlights blinded her and she pulled sharply to the side while the fire truck passed, its men huddled shapes along its sides. The fire must truly be out for them to leave, she thought, and drove on. Darkness pressed against her eyelids forcing them shut, her hands were numb and her lips dry. Thoughts of sleep pulled at her. Beds soft and safe, dogs curled cosily in baskets, the sweet smell of fresh sheets ... her eyelids drooped and she battled them open, wrenching the jeep back onto the track. The engine's throb seemed part of her and she swore she never wanted to smell pimento again.

Something blocked her way. The house. She turned off the engine and slept.

She awoke to find her face resting on her arms across the steering wheel. Layers of mist drifted, chilling the air, and she guessed day break would not be long away. Stiff and cold, still half asleep she wondered what to do.

A figure limped toward her, a beloved familiar shape and as in a dream she stepped to the ground and went toward

it. "You are safe," she said, close to tears, "Oh my darling you are safe."

She hugged the man close, pressing her face to his chest. "Your leg, is it all right?" She heard distant guns. "Quickly! Back to the cellar."

"What are you saying, Mother? You're half asleep. I'm fine. Just a blister on my heel. A wash and some sleep is all I need. Mr. Jack said to take over the spare room. A couple of men are keeping watch and will call if the fire flares up again but I don't think it will."

Angelique shook her head. For a moment she had thought-what? It didn't matter, Peter was safe.

They found the room with twin beds and Peter was asleep in an instant. Angelique tucked a blanket gently around him then sat by his head, watching his face and loving it through the long predawn hours. Only when she heard movement downstairs did she go to the other bed and sleep.

Peter woke her with a brush of his finger across her cheek. "Mother, breakfast's ready. I'll meet you downstairs."

She found the bathroom and washed. Amazingly she had her handbag with her and thought her clothes were not as crisp as usual, her hair and face looked as perfect as always when she joined the others in the dining room.

The Downeyss were overwhelmingly grateful. The fire, though it had burned fiercely, had not covered much ground and everything would soon be back to normal. After all the excitement it was rather a let down when Peter and Angelique got into the Mercedes and drove away.

"Where the hell have you two been?" Leland shouted before they had even stopped the car's engine. "I called everyone and, of course, those stupid Downeys have always been too cheap to install a phone."

"We fought a fire, Dad," Peter ran around the car to open Angelique's door. "It was super exciting and you should have seen mother, driving men around in the middle of the night. We had to beat it out and the fire truck arrived with no water and no chemicals."

Naomi met them at the top of the verandah steps. "A phone call for Master Peter."

When he had gone Angelique said, "You must not be angry, Leland. The boy enjoyed the adventure and I am glad we were able to help Jack and Jane."

"But I worried! I don't like to think of my ..."

Angelique was tired and angry. "Your name is not shamed just because I help a friend, Leland!"

"That's not what I m ..."

"Guess what?" Peter bounded into the hall as they

entered. "That was the Daily Harvest. They heard about the fire and want to do a story about my helping fight it. Evidently the fire chief said I took heroic action in helping his men when they were nearly surrounded by flames." He laughed. "All fibs, of course, but who am I to turn down being made a celebrity !" Now I'm going to take a swim and sleep by the pool all day. Coming, Mother?"

"That sounds good," she said.

The two of them left for their rooms and Leland sat down in a chair, alone in the big hall. One hand reached for his breast pocket, touching something small, hard and metallic. His mouth sank at the corners and his eyes rested emptily on the door through which his wife and son had gone.

CHAPTER X

Angelique found herself in continuous battle against the desire to beg Peter to stay longer and forget the job in London. How unfair such a request would be! They had pushed him out on his own and now he was independant - no longer hers to keep.- But like small hot needles dread and temptation twitched at the pit of her stomach.

They took a last trip to Whiskey Cove. Just the two of them, Leland had business to attend to in Royaltown. He'd asked his son to accompany him but Peter had preferred the beach. "It's my last chance, father. You don't need me, do you?"

"No, I don't need you," Leland had said and walked stiffly away.

Angelique wore a yellow cotton dress with the scarf Peter had given her fluttering at her throat as they drove away from Brougham Hall. The air was lanquid, still fresh but promising later heat. Peter's white shirt stood out against the golden tan of his skin and his tumbled hair was bleached by the sun. He drove at a gentle pace and they pointed out things to each other with a word, a nod,

a smile. The road was quiet and greenery on either side rippled in small breezes, ripe and content.

When they reached the spaciousness of Angelique's veldt they raced across it, wind whipping warm against their faces, snatching the song from Peter's lips and pulling Angelique's hair free to stream about her head. She laughed aloud and told herself to remember this moment's happiness for less wondrous times.

Startled cattle looked up and stopped chewing while white egrets rose from their backs like seaspray. A creamy calf ran in circles with its tail looped over its rump and grass lashed wildly at the landrover's passing.

They parked in shade and carried the lunch basket swinging between them down to the hut.

"Look at that water! Let's go!" Peter ripped off his shirt and threw it on the table. "To heck with swim trunks I'm going starkers like we always used to." He kicked the rest of his clothes onto the bench and with a war whoop dashed toward the sea.

Angelique, smiling, watched him. Still the impatient little boy she thought and began to remove her own clothes. Holding the two tiny pieces of swim suit she hesitated. They had always swum here nude. It had been one of the delightful freedoms of the cove. She looked down at her body still trim and taut. Why not now? She pulled pins

from her hair, left bathing cap with bikini on the table and, taking two towels, walked lightly across the hot beach. She watched Peter swimming with strong fast strokes. Sand tickled her toes and the breeze caressed her. She hummed as she wound through the stones out to the flat rock where she dropped the towels and dove neatly into the water. It received her, exhilerating, rushing through her usually capped hair. Bobbing to the surface she swept it back with her hands. Peter was beside her.

"Let us chase fish," she said, and side by side they hovered and twisted over darting brightly colored shapes, forgetting the outside world for this magic silent one. They rose spluttering and out of breath, gasped and dove again.

When they left the water they rubbed sun tan cream on each other's backs, (How strong his muscles beneath her touch) spread the towels and lay on their stomachs. They talked, and dozed, and thought of nothing while the water lapped and the sun beat down.

Angelique felt it burning hot and strong through her loins. The rock beneath her face smelt salty and baked. She rose on one elbow and looked at the sleeping boy beside her, so young and vital, so very beautiful. Her hand crept out and stroked the satiny shoulder. Peter turned his head and looked into her eyes - his lashes tangled

with sea and sleep. His face grew serious with something deep and fervent and she wanted to turn away but could not.

"I don't want to go. Let me stay here with you," he whispered.

How often she had prayed to hear those very words and now her emotions clashed and fought, culminating in an inexplicable fear. As though in a trance, eyes still locked to his, she heard herself say, "You must go, Darling, you cannot stay here. Your life is in England."

For a long moment they stared at one another then with an effort Angelique smiled. "I am going to put lunch out, you must be hungry." She got to her feet holding the towel against her nakedness, wrapping it into a sarong as she walked away.

As she reached the hut she heard a splash and dressed quickly, watching Peter drive through the water toward the beach. Taking the basket outside she opened it while he dressed and then they sat with their backs against a log, eating and drinking, talking softly with long moments of silence. A fishing boat appeared on the horizon and they joked about the tourists who were probably seasick on board. When they had finished eating they went for a walk through the forest and into a field. It was natural they should hold hands. The air was soft and warm.

The next day was Peter's last and it towered like a destructive wave making them cling to each other like frightened children. Leland took the day off to share with his son but there was no room for him and his jokes and efforts at conversation fell flat.

They went to the Hilton Hotel for dinner and ate on the terrace.

"You are beautiful," Peter whispered and Angelique knew she was.

Crystal sparkeled and plates and cutlery made their music. A band played.

"Let's dance. Mind, Father?"

"No, go ahead." Leland beckoned the waiter for another drink. "I'm not much of a dancer with this leg of mine."

Angelique had almost forgotten his slight limp and for some reason this allusion to it jarred her. She was about to say something when Peter put his arm around her waist and led her onto the small dance floor.

They enjoyed the lively calypsos and at one time Melissa appeared and took Peter off to dance with her while Angelique was whirled about by a small, plump man with merry eyes.

Back together again Peter said, "That Melissa's really something isn't she?"

"She has her ways," Angelique smiled.

"She thinks a lot of you. By the way, I saw Mr. Landy over by the bar."

"Did you wave to him?"

"He was too busy watching you. I think he's in love with you, Mother."

"Nonsense. Funny little man."

"He's not really funny or little you know."

"Is he not?"

Peter pulled her to him. The music was sweet and sad.

"We must go soon." Angelique looked at Leland who nodded over a fresh whiskey.

Peter followed her gaze and they danced on as the band played Sentimental Journey. Such an old fashioned tune. It took her back... Strange they should have that among their otherwise local repertoire.

A breeze blew off the sea and darkness isolated their small island of brightness. A moon hovered overhead, palms rustled and the music seemed made of whispers and sighs and memories. Angelique melted into the strong body of her son, feeling his protective maleness enclose her. If this was heaven she could wish for nothing more. For one short period of time she allowed herself this surrender and as the dance ended she felt his lips brush her forehead.

Leland, dulled by liquor, sat in the back seat of the Bently while Angelique rode next to Peter. Leland had wanted Roosevelt and the Rolls that night but had given in to his son's wish to drive and Roosevelt had watched them leave with such a disgruntled expression it had made Angelique laugh. Now she was glad they were without him.

The narrow ghostly road snaked ahead and the car hummed along at an even pace. Suddenly the headlights spotted something lying in the middle and Peter braked sharply. A donkey foal raised its head and blinked at them from its bed on the warm tarmac.

"What'sa matter? Let's get home," Leland grumbled, but they ignored him.

"I'll have to move it." Peter left the car.

Angelique watched him gather the fuzzy beast in his arms and carry it carefully to the roadside where he laid it in the grass.

"Its mother can't be far away," he said when he came back. "So sleepy it hardly noticed me."

"I hope it stays where you put it," said Angelique.

They watched the foals head sink to the ground, eyes shut. Angelique thought she saw its tiny muzzle blow wide in a sigh. "It's too sleepy to go anywhere." Peter released

the brake and Angelique relaxed against him. How nice for a man to be so strong and yet so gentle - but tomorrow he would be gone. How could she bear to be alone again? Peter, seeming to sense her thoughts, put an arm around her, pressing her close. "I'll be back," he whispered and they drove slowly home.

After Peter had helped Leland to bed he said to Angelique, "Don't forget this is my last night. You will come won't you?"

"Yes," she said.

She bathed and put on her favorite night dress and neglegee. She brushed her hair and dabbed perfume between her breasts, seeing in the mirror that her cheeks were flushed and her eyes bright. Then she went down the hall to his room, already feeling the pain of tomorrow's loneliness. She hesitated outside his door, then she tapped.

"Come in." He lay in bed, waiting. "Sit down."

Angelique sat beside him, looking at his beloved face and grieving its loss.

"You're so beautiful," he said, "nobody could ever be like you."

She said nothing.

"Let me stay." Taking her hand he stroked the fingers, one by one. "Let me be with you always. I don't need college or any of it."

He pulled her down to him. She felt his warmth, her nostrils basked in the sweet smell of him, she dissolved in the remembered softness of the young curve of his neck and her lips sought his. Suddenly she saw the shining eyes of the teddy bear on the dresser, they seemed to be laughing, or perhaps crying. What am I doing, something screamed inside her, this is my son, my son! Quickly turning her face she kissed Peter on the cheek and stood up, ignoring the arms that reached for her. "You get a good night's sleep. Cara will awaken you a seven. Goodnight." Avoiding his eyes she left him.

Cold with horror she ran through dark rooms and out onto the lawn where she stood shaking and sick. What had she done? Was she mad, almost making love to her own son? She who for so long had denied herself any feelings except maternal love for the child always so far away had been overcome with depravity! Like those terrible people one read of in cheap newspapers! Angelique's mind threshed like an animal in a trap.

But what of Peter? Her body stiffened. It was he she should worry about, let her own torture come later. "Oh God," she prayed, "Do not let me have harmed him!" Perhaps he had not recognized what had grown between them, was too innocent... A sound broke from her throat, half sob, half groan and she twisted the rings into her

fingers. So few hours left to make things right and in them he must see her only as his mother. She must make him believe he had imagined anything else. Angelique straightened her shoulders. Until he was gone that was all that mattered.

She forced herself to stay in bed until the usual seven o'clock, then spent time on her make-up, eracing the paleness and circles beneath her eyes. As she went toward the dining room she could hear Peter talking to Naomi, and paused for a moment, closing her eyes and mustering courage before joining him.

"Good morning, Peter, are you all packed? I think perhaps you should carry a raincoat, or perhaps take one of father's umbrellas."

He looked at her gloomily.

"Cheer up. I envy you the exciting time you are sure to have. Is Susan meeting you?"

"No. Mother I don't ..."

"Excuse me, Peter. Naomi! Tell Cook the Colonel and I will not want dinner tonight." She drank her orange juice. "I must get in touch with Doris about that gardener she told me of. Now, Peter, I want you to remember that even if you do not live with Uncle Ben he is still your guardian while you are over there and you must always

keep in touch with him. And do be careful of strange types in London."

She evaded the hurt in his puzzled eyes, turning aside his attempts to regain their usual happy intimacy. She pushed away her plate. "I must get your father out of bed and gave the maids their orders for the day. You get ready, we leave at ten o'clock sharp."

"Can't we have a last swim?"

His eyes! She couldn't bear it. "You may if you like but I must get father moving."

Briskly she left the room, calling orders to the maids, telling Roosevelt to have the Rolls ready, trying to stop her heart from breaking.

Peter did not swim but finished his packing and returned to the table to share a cup of coffee with his parents.

At ten the Rolls was at the door. "You sit in front Peter," said Angelique, "it is too hot for the three of us back here."

She did open the divider between them and spent most of the journey imparting bits of motherly advice, forcing herself to play the role now so alien to her.

The plane taxied up almost as soon as they arrived at the airport and at sight of it Angelique felt the blood drain from her body. The moment of parting came and with

her hands on either side of Peter's face she kissed him. "Be careful, my son," she whispered and eyes big with misery Peter backed away.

"Goodbye, Mother," he said.

She forced a smile and half lifted her hand in a forgotten wave as inside she died.

She watched the young man walk away and knew, however evil it was, that she loved him, not as a son, but as a lover.

"He never even said good-bye to me," said Leland's voice beside her.

She turned and looked at him with unseeing eyes.

It wasn't until they reached home that the numbness that had protected Angelique began to fall away leaving her raw and bereft. She stood not knowing what to do and when she walked the hollow tapping of her heels mocked her. She found herself standing at the door of Peter's room, already tidied and empty of him. Fighting panic she went to the photo of the little blond boy that hung on the wall and ran her fingers over his face.

"You are gone too, my baby," she murmured, and for the first time realized that it was so. "I thought you would stay my baby forever but you fooled me and became a man, waking feelings ... now I have lost you both and am left with nothing ."

Wandering into the bathroom she pressed a damp washcloth to her face.

A mournful howl drew her to the verandah and she saw Hero sitting in the middle of the drive. He lifted his muzzle and howled again. "Hero?" she called.

Naomi came up behind her. "He cry, Mum. Master take silly dogs with him in the car. Hero's heart break, Mum."

"Oh, Hero," said Angelique almost to herself.

"I think your heart ache for Master Peter, Mum, come I make tea. Master Peter a fine boy, I hope mine be like him." The little woman patted her stomach and looked up with a shy smile. "I maybe call him Peter?"

Angelique smiled wearily and sat down. She supposed it was tea she drank, she noticed no taste, and when dinner was served she sat alone and picked at the food until she could bear it no longer and went to bed.

Her mind chewed and tore at memories of the past two weeks. Only two? It seemed a lifetime! Had she not seen what was happening? Could she have stopped it? And yet her heart still trembled to think of him and she longed to have him beside her. Frightened and hating herself for her desires she left the bed and went to the drawing room. Putting a symphony on the stereo she turned up the volume so that it throbbed and beat, driving the sound of

Peter's voice from her ears and his ghost from the corners of the room.

CHAPTER XI

Angelique stayed in her room, brooding and sick at heart, afraid to face the future and its emptiness, mourning the past and its loss, disgusted with her perversion, for however she thought of it, made excuses, so she always ended up accusing herself. The maids tiptoed in with wondering eyes bringing food she left untouched, and Leland drove off early and came home late noticing nothing.

Once she tried to pray but felt too tainted to face even the God from whom she had long ago strayed. She was too filled with shame to face herself.

On the fourth night there was a timid knock at her door and Cara announced, "Mr. Landy come to see you, Mum. I tell him you sick but he insist."

"Tell him ... No I will come." She didn't know why she changed her mind.

Her fingers felt almost too weary to pin her hair but in time she was ready and made her way toward the front verandah.

"Good evening, Mr. Landy."

"Good evening, Mrs. Brougham."

He sat in the chair alongside hers and they said nothing, just looked out at the palms swaying gently against the night sky. Calm drifted over Angelique, the turmoil in her mind fading against the hugeness of the sky and its stars. A distant drum beat carried her on its rhythm as though she trod water, unaware, for the moment, of the demons waiting in its depths.

Mr. Landy began to speak, his voice soft with the lilt of the islands. At first it was just a soothing sound and then her mind clung to his words, reaching for them as though they were life preservers.

He spoke of growing things, of the land, small happenings in the area. He painted pictures that replaced the blackness of her thoughts. He paused, raising a hand as though to bring attention to the closer world. "Hear that frog clicking and all those insects singing. They, with the bats and owls think to own the night, each decorating his own little piece of it." They listened.

"I take my mare's foal away from her this week and, mon, she mourn something terrible. See, she scare, one day and, by mistake, step on his leg when he sleep, hurting him only a little but he need time with the vet. It most break my heart to hear her cry day and night and I get little sleep. But I know she will be better, nature make her strong and when they meet again they be friends and

the hurt gone. Yes soon she toss her head and feel the wind again, notice the birds still singing and the sun stirring the juices in the cane. Till then it hard but it will happen. My, hark to that nightingale!"

They sat, listening. A clock struck inside the house and when it had finished Mr. Landy stood up. "Goodbye, Mrs. Brougham. I thank you for giving me your company this night. Come ride with me soon."

He was gone but Angelique sat on, her thoughts moths that touched reality but lightly, then fluttered on. That night she slept for the first time in five nights.

In that trough of limbo between waking and sleeping Angelique gradually became aware of the opening of jalousies, cook singing in the kitchen, birds twittering. She sank back toward sleep but her spirit rebelled and forced her to rise and follow the morning routine of showering, dressing, making herself perfect.

Leland was at breakfast and she joined him, refusing the eggs Naomi brought, taking only coffee and toast. She felt frail as though she had just risen from a sick-bed and the colors of the garden looked brighter than she remembered.

"Price of silver's risen," Leland said into his Times, "Perhaps I should invest."

"Hero!" Angelique greeted the dog who galloped joyfully toward her. He probably missed Peter too.

Leland spoke again. "I wasn't able to show the boy the things I'd planned. I wanted him to see how I run the property but he wouldn't come with me."

"I will make lists of everything at Worlds End. I would be distressed if Lady Lillian found something missing when she returns." Yes, that was a good idea, she must keep busy, build her life anew. Around what? Keep busy.

"I thought maybe we'd get to know each other. He's almost a man now. Doing well at school, in sports. Like me in many ways."

"I must have Roosevelt go to Whiskey Cove. Bring back the soft drinks and towels." Do not think of your time there with him. Forget the man - remember only the child ...

"I wanted to show him the new grove I planted down by the west boundry. Thought we might go out for a drink one night, just the two of us. Wish you'd had that party Angela, I'd have liked to show him off. Turned out better than any of the other lads, Downey's or Tregarons."

Angelique beckoned Naomi for more coffee. "I am hiring a new maid to do laundry. It is too much for Naomi in her condition, she cannot do a good job. She knows

a girl..."

"Perhaps next time he'll stay longer." Leland folded the paper and left the table.

"I must have the new girl polish the floor too." Angelique looked critically at the gleaming wood.

She drove up to Worlds End immediately and taking out a note book began to write everything down starting with the chairs on the verandah. As she looked at the wicker rocker she half wished Lady Lillian was sitting there. But no - those shrewd eyes would see, and perhaps turn away in disgust. Angelique wrote quickly and moved on, forcing her concentration on each object in each room. Only when she looked onto the small cement building out back did her control crumble and, catching a whiff of its musty smell, a sob broke in her throat and others crowded to burst her chest. "Oh Peter, Peter, why have you left me!" She cried it aloud then spun away, going to a linen closet to count sheets, noting each one precisely in her book.

During the following days Angelique tried to keep busy, tried to control the hopelessness and fear of herself that waited in ambush. Tried to deny the terrible loneliness that walked each step with her.

She both longed for and dreaded the mail. Peter always wrote to say he had arrived safely, now if he did not it would mean he hated her. But what if he did and

said things he mustn't? Then she would know she had done him a terrible harm.

The note came - a simple noncommittal scrawl on the back of a post card of the Tower of London. Angelique tried to read something into it but it could have been a carbon copy of any other of the "arrived safely" notes through the years. She felt relieved but a traiterous stab of disappointment disturbed her at the same time.

She wandered aimlessly through the house, sometimes berating the maids over small matters, more often ignoring them. She would stand at a window looking out, reliving some moment of those two weeks, hearing Peter's voice. Then her face would cloud and she would hurry to the desk or take up a book though soon her eyes would stray from pen or printed page and she would stare into space again.

So often in the past she had stopped during the day to imagine what her little boy was doing, say to herself, only four more months, three, two. Now there was nothing. It was as if that child were dead ..She tried to reason with herself. Told herself all children grew up, but that child had been the staff she depended on to support her from day to day and now she floundered in deep and treacherous waters.

Angelique watched at rain pelted the roses, tearing

petals and tangling the stems. A gust spattered in at her and as though it brought a message she turned away and went to the bookshelf from which she withdrew a fat album. It held all the photos taken of Peter since babyhood and she carried it to her room and locked the door. For an hour she went through the pages photo by photo and after looking long and close at the last, of the blond, long legged boy in soccar uniform, she closed the cover and holding the album against her breast rocked soundlessly back and forth.

She buried it at the back of her closet and closing the door leaned against it with her eyes shut and her breath coming in long shuddering dry sobs.

At noon Melissa phoned. "Where have you been? Do come for tea tomorrow. No excuses, I know you're going through the back-to-school blues. Let me help you over them."

"Oh, Melli, really I cannot!"

"Of course you can. I expect you at three." A solid click. Melissa had hung up.

Oh Melissa, would you invite me if you knew? To think I judged you wicked! At least you are natural. The receiver hummed and she put it back. Perhaps if she had followed her friend's example ... Oh Peter, I am sorry.

If only we could start those two weeks afresh, wipe out all the happiness and tainted joy of them. But would she do differently? Could she? Had she not been rushed along joyously unknowing on the fatal current?

She must stop these thoughts! She would visit Melissa. Suddenly she looked forward to it immensely.

After telling Cara what clothes to prepare for tomorrow she changed into her swim suit and for the first time since Peter left went to the pool. Without pause she dived in and swam up and down, up and down until she gasped for breath. When she pulled herself out she noticed her tan was fading but she could not sunbathe today. The poolside was too empty, the water too quiet. She told herself she must get used to him not being there, not being anywhere ... tomorrow she would stay, or the next day.

At night she dreamed of him, felt his breath against her face and his body pressing against hers. She awakened in panic and was afraid to sleep again for fear of tasting that sweet wonderful poison that had nearly destroyed them.

Angelique almost changed her mind at the last minute and told Roosevelt to take the Mercedes back to the garage but instead she smoothed kid gloves over her fingers and prepared to leave.

"Where are you going, Angela?"

She was suprised to see Leland, having thought him off the property hours ago. She wondered if his troubles with the banana pickers were over, she couldn't remember if he had mentioned them lately. "I am going to Melissa's," she said.

"Could you buy me some stamps at Port Dolores? Stupid secretary forgot."

"All right," she said, letting out the clutch.

It seemed a long time since she had driven along the flat coastal road and the sun shimmered off it and off the polished body of the car, radiating heat that seldom reached those who lived in the hills. Angelique rolled up the windows and turned on the air-conditioner, separating herself from the fields of sugar cane now being worked anew, the year's crops harvested and gone. Men, women, and children worked in the long furrows earthing up green young plants and from Angelique's cool interior it looked a pleasant and comfortable job. She switched on the radio and was engulfed by sounds of the London Symphony Orchestra. Was Peter by chance listening too? She turned quickly to a local station where a sing-song voice spoke with familiarity to local housewives who had written to ask for a favorite tune to be played. What kind of women were they? Probaly maids like her own or housewives spanking

their children - or making love to strong young men.

She switched off and turned down the long drive to Last Horizon. It ran through half a mile of sugar cane then entered an oasis of well cared for hedges, lawns, shrubs and flowers, the setting for Ingram's dark stained ranch-style home. The sea nestled cosily against white beach at the foot of the lawn and a row boat bobbed against the shore. Children's toys lay scattered and as soon as Angelique pulled up the owners, a tow headed sturdy boy and girl of four and five, came scampering. Each took a hand, tugging toward the house.

"Coom, Mz. Broum, coom see me new toy. Tis a snake and Danny say it bite me." The island accent sounded strange from this pink and white mite who looked up at Angelique with ernest sea blue eyes.

"Chuff," said the boy, kicking the ground with a calloused bare foot, "Silly fool woman believe all thing."

Angelique laughed and their nanny came running, apologising. "They not suppose to be out here, Mum, they suppose be napping."

"Oh, you dreadful children," Melissa flew from the house. "Run along with Nanny now." She cuffed them both lovingly and watched as they raced off arguing about the size of a turtle someone had caught that morning. "Aren't they terrible? And that accent! But they will pick it

up from the servants. I should have an English nanny like you did for Peter. Oh well, they'll learn quickly enough when they go to school." She turned to Angelique. "It's marvellous to see you! You do look peaked. Come on inside and have one of my special fruit punches, I just invented it and it's absolutely delicious. Trouble is I get tiddly in no time unless I keep reminding myself there's rum in it."

The house was cool and overflowing with bourganvillia, hibiscus and roses. Goldfish swam in the dividing wall between two rooms, lights striking fire from their scales, and the furnishings in the living room were as extravagant in their mixture of French, English, and Island craftsmanship as everything else about Melissa. Big colorful cushions were flung about indiscriminately and a stereo played soft music. Ice clinked in the jug a smiling maid carried and the sighing of the sea was always present. Melissa took a glass after her guest and folded herself, legs tucked sideways, into a chintz covered chair.

Angelique placed herself on the sofa, choosing its position out of habit to have the most flattering light on her face. Deliberately she removed her gloves then tasted her drink. "Delicious!" she said, feeling it rich and tingling on her tongue.

"It is isn't it! Did you have an absolutely marvellous

time with Peter? What a divine man he's grown into. My goodness if I hadn't know who he was I would have seduced him for sure. You and he looked the perfect couple dancing at the Hilton last week - I expect a lot of people thought you'd found a lover at last."

I should not have come, she will read it in my face. Angelique took a long sip of her drink, seeming to concentrate on the cherry at the bottom. I should have known ... waited until I am more under control.

But seemingly oblivious to her friend's distress Melissa was already on another subject. "I must tell you about my new man. Not the one you danced with, oh no. This one is in oil...Texas I think - and just rolling ..." Melissa spun long breathless sentences, brimming with excitement, her eyes flashing, hands waving and flowing the wide sleeves of her purple gown that should have clashed with her red hair but didn't.

Angelique watched her with envy. If only she could be so uninhibited! She accepted a refill of punch.

The doorbell brought Melissa to her feet. "I'll get it," she called to the maid.

Alone in the room Angelique wandered to the book shelf. Bill's more studious literature mixed among Melissa's lighter tastes. Angelique pulled out a book on France. It was filled with fine photographs and she felt the man

who took them must have loved the country. She looked closely at the village streets, almost recognizing the heavy gray haired woman in a black coat who carried a loaf of bread under her arm, the falcon faced young man waiting at a bus stop. She walked again the sunny hectic streets of Paris, saw the iron grill work, small boys in berets and short pants dawdling to school, country cows standing in a gateway.

"What have you found that's so intriguing?"

She looked up at Melissa's voice. "This book on France. It is lovely ... Oh!" A man in uniform stood next to her friend, and something inside her jumped in recognition.

"You remember Captain Beresford?" Melissa asked.

"Of course." Setting the book aside she went forward and gave him her hand. "What a coincidence, I was just thinking of my homeland . We talked about your visit there if you remember."

"I remember. It's good to see you again, Mrs. Brougham."

The timbre of his voice struck a suprising response in Angelique and she studied him with interest as they sat across from each other.

"Tell us about army life, Brian," asked Melissa. "How do you like the island?"

"Beautiful place. Just wish I had more time to explore ..."

He is handsome, thought Angelique. Tall and strong. What would it be like to have him hold me ... feel his uniform against me, his whispers in my hair. Whatever am I thinking! "The heat? Oh, one gets used to it in time. What have you seen so far?"

Her eyes wandered over him carefully so he wouldn't see, and she wanted him. It shocked her to feel the longing of her body, the hunger Peter had aroused burning in her now for this stranger...though he seemed no stranger. She looked down at her hands still and beautiful in her lap. No one would ever guess. Leland had aroused passion in her as a young woman and then had killed it so she thought there was nothing left for any man. But now...

A child wailed. "Excuse me, I must see what the latest disaster is." Melissa rushed from the room.

"She's some girl, isn't she?" said the Captain smiling. "Bit much in large doses though." He stirred his drink before speaking in a softer voice. "I hoped we'd meet again."

"On this island it is difficult not to run into someone if one gets out at all. It is always a pleasure to see a new face, conversation can become very insular and boring."

"I can understand that. Perhaps I could take you out for dinner some evening - I will try not to bore you."

"I would like that, Captain Beresford."

"Please call me Brian. May I call you Angela?"

"Angelique."

"A beautiful name. Angelique." He leaned back in his chair as Melissa returned

A shiver ran through Angelique and she was afraid her eyes were too bright.

"My goodness, the things children get up to," said Melissa. "Danny locked Caroline in the broom closet and wouldn't tell where the key was. I finally promised him a cream cake for tea then he handed it over. Little monster! Now tell me, how is polo going this year? I saw in the paper that you're on the team Brian."

"Yes, luckily. We won the last few matches. I played in England but these chaps are better I think and I've got a couple of fine young ponies. Do you like polo? Perhaps you would care to come to a game?"

He would be a fine horseman, thought Angelique. Leyland used to play.

"I can't," Melissa was saying,"but Angela, you must." You used to go every weekend when Peter was tiny and I remember how you loved it."

"Perhaps I will," smiled Angelique. "When are they?"

"Every other Saturday. We played this last so the next will be a fortnight. Do come, I would love to have you."

His eagerness excited her and she saw the interested spark in Melissa's eyes and didn't care.

The tea trolly squeaked in loaded with bread, butter and mango jam, dainty cakes, and china tea pot with matching cups. Not as pretty nor as expensive as Mr. Landy's. What a foolish thought. Angelique spread a dainty napkin across her skirt.

Conversation flowed and Angelique relaxed. The air was saturated with fragrance and yet she was acutely aware of the captain's cologne. She heard birds in the casurina trees outside, the intermittant clink of a gardener's hoe - and the shuffle of the Captain's boots as he shifted his feet on the carpet. Through the window the garden was a continuation of the color inside but khaki was all she saw. She told herself she was a fool, no more that a bitch in heat, but she didn't care. She would prove she was normal after all.

"It's so far back in the hills, in the next parish." Melissa was telling about the property her grandmother had left her. "I can't decide whether to keep it or not. I say, why don't we all go up there next week? Could you make it, Brian? It's a good chance to see some of the

local scenery. Angela?"

"I see no reason why I cannot," said Angelique and waited for Brian's reply.

"Yes, I can get a pass. Tuesday seems a good day. Now I must be getting back. Thank you for inviting me, Melissa, it has been a pleasure." He stood up and smiled at Angelique, "Until next week."

She watched through the window as he went to his car.

"There, isn't he a dear?" Melissa said returning from waving him away.

"You little fox. Inviting him without telling me."

"You wouldn't have come, would you? Now don't say you didn't enjoy yourself. I had to cheer you somehow."

Impulsively Angelique grasped her friend's hands and kissed her cheek. "You are a dear and I do not mind at all. Now I must leave for I have errands in Port Dolores. I look forward to next tuesday."

As she drove away Angelique relived the strange afternoon. Perhaps it would be different next time she saw him - she was going through a painful time and was vulnerable - but anticipation pulsed in her throat.

She remembered with a feeling akin to affection the officers cap resting on a pillow, the brass buttons on his jacket, the sharply creased trousers. Strangely she couldn't remember his face at all.

CHAPTER XII

Port Dolores was a veri-colored collection of shops that clustered, leaning on one another, at the foot of a long hill. In front was a square with a patch of lawn, two palm trees, and an enormous rusty anchor that gave the impression of holding the buildings from toppling into the sea that ceaselessly nibbled behind them. A lane between the butcher's and the Post Office gave way to a pier at which fishing boats tugged, tethered by stout ropes, their decks a web of drying nets.

Angelique parked between a bicycle and a donkey. The dozing animal flattened its ears crabbily as she passed to climb the uneven steps into the cluttered dusk of the general store where a whisp of gray skinned old woman sat behind the counter fanning herself with a broad leaf. She stood, becoming no taller than when she sat.

"Good afternoon, Miz Brougham, mum. You come for material?"

"Yes, Dinny."

"It not come yet, Mum."

"But it is four months ..." No use arguing. She

should have bought it in Royaltown. Just for maids uniforms she'd thought ... ah well. "Give me a chocolate bar then, Dinny."

"Yes, Mum. Material come next time for sure, Mum." The old woman took the candy from a pigeon hole in the wall behind her and gave it to Angelique, ringing up the money noisily on the ancient cash register.

Angelique crossed to the Post Office, a solid building and the only one that looked as though it was really supposed to be there. A fan circled from the ceiling at the top of the wide stairs where people sat and loafed and gossiped, their feet shuffling like dry leaves across the stone floor. The line of customers at the clerk's window moved to let Angelique in at the head and she wondered how long it would be before these courteous people were affected by the spreading unrest and lack of respect that already showed itself in Royaltown.

"Two sheets of stamps and five air letters." She had put off writing to Peter afraid of saying too much. On this limited space she would be safe.

Folding everything into her bag she went out the side door to where she could look over the harbor. A gull sat on a mast, then with a skreech and leaving a stream of white, flew toward the black inter-island freighter that swung at anchor in deep water. A small

figure dumped garbage overboard and more gulls congregated, diving and screaming.

One of these nights lighters would travel from shore loaded with bananas from Brougham Hall and the other big properties. Angelique used to bring Peter to watch and she remembered the swaying lights, counting voices and chanting, the shiny black torsos heaving heavy green stems, all to be repeated as the fruit was unloaded from lighter into big ship. It had been exciting, almost unreal, and Peter had squeaked and jumped wanting to be in the thick of it. When he was old enough he was able to stand on the pier with his father to help supervise. She could see him now - so fair among all the darkness. Will he mind me having an affair with the soldier? Foolish thought, how would he know? A son did not think of such things. But a lover? He is not a lover. Never! Never!

She tore open the candy wrapper and broke off a piece of chocolate. It wasn't until she lifted it to her lips that she saw the squirming maggots. Revolted she threw the whole thing into the gutter and walked briskly to her car.

A white paper fluttered from under the wind-shield wiper. Probably an ad of some sort. She ripped it out and threw it on the seat beside her bag.

As she pulled on to the main road a small van bounded

ahead and she recognized the red hair and black tam of the Yorkshireman. He must still be staying at the Guest House. Angelique wondered what it was like there now. The Jones must be old. She turned on the radio to music which was interrupted by a news alert. "An American tourist has been killed on a lonely road in Triangle county. It is thought to be the work of agitators." Foolish for him to have gone up there, Angelique thought, but she checked the locks on her car doors and was glad to reach home before nightfall.

Leland was storming about the house when she arrived.

"Whatever is the matter?" she said picking up a letter from her sister off the hall table.

"The ships are threatening to strike! Bloody nerve when the crop's ready to go and all the trouble I went to to get it in time. Now they'll let it rot. Prime Minister, that's who it is. Wants to ruin us all. Drive us out." He tipped his glass and ice clunked against his teeth. He went to the liquor cabinet for a refil.

Angelique read her letter.

"Where would the country be without us, eh? We keep them bloody going, that's what, then they try to scupper us. Greedy captains that's the trouble."

"I should think it will be the owners not the captains," said Angelique. "Anyway, I saw the ship today and it looked

ready to me. They threaten every year but they never do it. I must change for dinner."

Picking up her handbag she noticed the paper she had brought in with it from the car. She almost threw it away then hesitated and opened it instead. The block letters startled her. WHITE MAN LEAVE US BE. It was like a slap in the face but it was the two words in red written free hand beneath that sent a dryness to her mouth. OR ELSE. The hurt she felt mixed with anger. How dare they? What had she ever done to them? Looking up to see Leland had noticed nothing she tore the paper in half, then again and again, screwing up the pieces and dropping them into the waste basket.

The letter she wrote to Peter after dinner filled the page nicely with snippets of news and when she had finished Angelique rested her chin on her hand and thought how good it had been to have someone to talk to and laugh with. She hadn't laughed since he had gone. She stamped the envelope and sharply drew in her breath realizing someone was in the room watching her, standing motionless by the door. She whirled to face him, dropping the envelope.

"I come to see if you want the car tomorrow, Mum." It was Roosevelt.

"Why are you still here?"

"I been workin' on the Rolls, Mum."

"Of course. No I shall not be going out tomorrow."

"Thank you, Mum." He went away.

Angelique picked up the letter and noticed her hand was shaking. It was the note, and the tourist being shot-they had upset her-but she was certainly not going to be intimidated in her own house, especially by her own imagination. No one must see her nervousness. She would ride tomorrow, that usually made her feel better and if she saw Luther she would give him something to do, something he didn't like. She put the letter on the table to be mailed, and went to bed.

Her dreams were a mad jumble and then she was being chased by a naked black man while Naomi ran laughing behind, her stomach a big red balloon. Suddenly Angelique was in Peter's arms and she noticed he was in uniform. His face came closer and closer to hers but just before their lips touched he turned into a teddy bear and she awoke trembling with desire to lie sick with shame.

The whinnying of the chestnut, left behind in the stable, was a sad reminder that followed Angelique and Harpoon for a long distance. They took a path they

had not taken with Peter, and Harpoon fresh from not having been ridden lately danced and played giving Angelique's mind no time to wander.

It tired her enough that she was able to relax beside the pool later and as she lay with her eyes closed she thought about Captain Beresford and wished it were a shorter time until she saw him again. She imagined them laughing together, walking hand in hand. Herself cheering him on at the polo match and then he would take her somewhere for dinner, somewhere small and intimate. Imagination! Perhaps that was all it would ever be! She sat up and put more oil on her legs, the musky smell of it rising to remind her of other days and other places where she had lain in the sun. Whatever the change in surroundings the smell was always the same and suddenly it bored her and she went into the house looking for something to keep her busy.

The next day she sorted through all her clothes with Cara's help and then drove to have her hair and nails done at the hotel. She avoided going out by the pool lest Jane Downey be there. She could not face her yet.

She caught up on her correspondence and spent an afternoon in the office with Miss Martin going through files: Peter's school, household expenses, her own personel expenditures, charities.

It was a relief to be in control of her thoughts again - except when she saw Naomi. That proudly bulging belly had become a flaunting reminder of her own loss and she hated it intensely. She played with excuses to fire the woman but could find no valid reason, she worked as well as any of them. Mealtimes were the worst when the belly pushed close bringing dishes, pouring drinks and Angelique would grow so tense perspiration would gleam along her nose. During the rest of the day she could avoid Naomi but when she did have to speak to her the words poured forth in a vicious tirade and the terror and tears in the little maid's eyes made her even crueller, as though her voice could puncture the placid fetus and send it into the past with her own son. Angelique often felt sick after these episodes and would go to her room and lie with the jalousies closed and a damp cloth on her forehead.

She spent as much time as possible away from the house, riding, driving to a distant shop for some imagined need. On the day she went to Royaltown she spent a long time in a yardage shop chosing material which she took to the seamstress who lived down a hodge podge side street. This woman had made Angelique's clothes for many years and was known by ladies of social note to be the best dress maker on the island. In her innocence the poor woman charged

little and worked in poverty on the luxurious materials brought her, creating fine clothes from drawings and magazine cuttings.

Angelique stood impatiently while the woman measured her. "You know my size," she argued wanting to escape the bleak hovel.

"You have lost weight, Mum. I can see it in my eye."

Angelique looked at the stack of materials she had brought. White for dancing with the Captain, brown for a more formal dinner, pink for a beach coat. What about a new nightdress? She smiled to herself, she would buy that, but then perhaps she would never need one with him. She licked her lips. How delicious this anticipation was. "Who is that?" Her eyes had stopped on the photograph of a laughing black child. She had often seen it before but never thought to ask, after all what was this woman's life to her?

The seamstress stopped and looked toward it with gentle loving eyes. "That my Johnathon. He such a beautiful boy but pnumonia get him long ago. I still feel him with me though. He all I have to talk to at night. Please turn 'round, Miz Brougham."

Angelique noticed how thin the seamstress was and wondered if the child hadn't starved to death.

Materials were being held against her and draped

around her body, cool and sensual against her skin. How nice to have a man touch her, stroke her...

"There, that all,Mum, and I have them ready in three weeks."

"No sooner?"

"Maybe two if I work nights, Mum."

"You do that." Angelique started out the door and then paused to take something from her purse. "Here," even as she gave the five pound note to the suprised woman she wondered why she did it. It was against all her principals to pay anything before all the work was finished. "Buy yourself food," she said, but it could not help the little boy in the photo now.

Shaking the world of poverty from her she went straight to the Tipperary Club and took her time over a fine meal. A reporter from the Harvest approached to discuss the story on Peter and when he left she congratulated herself on having spoken about her son quite normally, much as she would have before he came home.

From overheard snatches of conversation Angelique realized that the island's unrest was on everyone's minds and already causing business difficulties. Evidently tourists were beginning to cancel reservations. Afraid of whispers, Angelique thought, after all we have the army here to protect us if need be. She smiled to think

that soon she would have her very own private army.

After leaving the restaurant she did a little shopping; a new skin cream from Europe, taupe eyeshadow and a pair of string riding gloves. The heat was wearying and she did not look forward to the long drive home, yet she knew the coolth of the mountains would be a relief.

As she left the city Angelique wished she had someone to talk to. Unless she took a servant she seemed to go everywhere alone, except to parties, and Leland was no company. She hadn't planned life to be like this. The wealth and luxuries yes, but someone to share them with had been the main thing. Peter had reminded her what companionship was, before that she had been content enough. Or dead, she thought grimly. A crash on the car roof scattered her musings and a coconut rolled down the rear window and onto the road. Now what if that had been a gunshot? Darkness fell and the road twisted and wound endlessly.

Hero was waiting as she entered the house and Naomi, who usually came to take any packages, hovered fearfully in the shadows.

As she dropped her hand to Hero's head Angelique saw a large manilla envelope on the hall table with other mail. She picked it up and turned it over and over. It was from Peter, addressed to her with "PERSONAL" written on it—

underlined. She stood afraid, holding the envelope as though it were a death warrant. She carried it to the bedroom where she set it on the bed, then she sat beside it. A few times her hand started toward it but came back alone. Impossible, she could not open it now! Perhaps when she was less tired. She buried it under the lingerie in her bottom drawer. Another day...

The envelope hovered, shadowing everything she did, bringing anew all the despair and pain. Did Peter condemn her? Or was it, her mind hesitated, a love letter? She shuddered as hot water from the shower spilled over her. Oh God, what a mess!

She ate dinner alone and just as she was finishing Mr. Landy arrived.

"Good evening, Mrs. Brougham. The Colonel sent a message he want to see me."

"He is not home yet. Sit down, Mr. Landy, I will have Naomi light a fire, it does get cool in the evenings."

They went into the drawing room.

"Is it the land again, Mr. Landy?" Once, years before, Leland, on a whim, offered to buy the strip of Mr. Landy's property that adjoined Brougham Hall. When his bid was refused, obtaining it had become almost an obsession and he kept offering more and more with Mr. Landy always turning him down. It was like a duel between the two men

and Angelique watched fascinated.

"I expect so," Mr. Landy smiled into the fire. "He should know now to save his breath."

"Why will you not sell it? Such a small piece."

"Well, Mrs. Brougham, that property was owned by my ancestors for a long time. It is part of me, every acre, and to lose the smallest piece would make me die a little. I love my home, Mrs. Brougham." He said it simply.

"Hello, hello. Got held up in Durran Bay," Leland blustered in. "Seen that new hotel they're building there? Going to be a bloody whopper. Here, have some whiskey."

Angelique excused herself and went to bed where her thoughts returned to the envelope. In vain she trained her imaginings away from it and on to tuesday but she wasn't strong enough and lying stiffly and silently on her back the tears slid down her temples and into her hair.

CHAPTER XIII

"Cara, bundle the clothes we take from my cupboards the other day. I carry them to the nuns." Outside Leland shouted orders among revving engines and Angelique went onto the verandah to see what was happening.

Four trucks were in the drive and she decided they must be preparing to load bananas for the ship tonight. Thank goodness, at least she wouldn't have to hear about that again for a while! "Leland," she called. "Did you get Landy's property?"

By the way he pretended not to hear she knew Mr. Landy still held firm and was pleased. Somehow it meant a lot to her that Leland should not win this battle with their gentle neighbor and their meetings always made her nervous until she knew the outcome. Turning back into the house she ate a hurried lunch and with the cast-offs in the back of the Mercedes set off up the steep back roads toward Sacred Heart School. She made this trip at least once a year, taking clothes she no longer wanted, many only worn once, to the nuns to distribute to the poor. Always the visit was like a homecoming for Angelique

who had been brought up a devout Catholic but who through the years had found less and less time for religion . Still this one visit gave her pleasure and reminded her of simpler days.

The bell at the gate rang a sweet sound when she pulled it and sight of the rosy cheeked nun, in familiar wide winged hat and flowing robes who ran to answer, was like a jump back into childhood. She was waved through to park in front of the ivy covered building and stepped from the car into the peaceful quietude that always seemed pooled inside these convent grounds.

"May I see Sister Marion?" she asked.

"She is with the animals. You know the way?"

"Yes." Angelique followed a narrow footpath shaded by a vine covered trellis. Piano music cascaded from open windows beside her. Scales trilling up and down, a snatch of a study, started, stopped, and begun again. Notes entwined in rambling discordant harmony. Once she had struggled with those same tunes. A voice from a schoolroom asked a question in french. Angelique paused to hear the answer given in a high voiced chorus. Chalke scratched on a blackboard. Nothing had changed. This could be any convent school in France.

Angelique stepped into the heat of a cobbled yard where geese waddled from a pond hissing with outstretched

necks, and a donkey came forward to nibble her sleeve. Against the wall reared a goat stretching for a tussock of grass and it turned its head to watch with eyes like golden suns. Hens pecked and scurried, clucking, barely making way for Angelique's feet and a rooster perched on a barrel crowing adolescently. As repetitive background to all this came anguished bellowing from the shed toward which Angelique headed.

Field-warm scents of new hay met her when she entered and then the smell of disinfectant . Three nuns crouched like big birds over the brown and white cow who lay in a turmoil of straw. One sat on its head whispering french endearmants while another worked by its tail, sleeves rolled back and arms bloody. The third hovered close to help, and fingered her beads.

Unnoticed, Angelique watched and admired the strength and earthiness of these holy women. She had met it many times before but it still suprised her.

The building rocked to a last desperate roar. Angelique saw a flash of wild eye through black robes and heard a combined sigh from the nuns as a slimy calf slid onto the straw. The cow heaved to her feet, long tongue reaching for her staggering baby.

"Ello, Angelique, mon cher!" Sister Marion came forward wiping bloody hands on straw. "That was a difficult

time. The baby was turned - you know? Now by God's will she is fine. Come, let us go inside."

Angelique followed the swishing robes in through the big doors of the school. Young girls in starched blouses and blue tunics rushed along dusky halls, and through transoms over schoolroom doors she heard desk lids close and chairs shuffle. Smells of chalk and pencils, apples and shoe polish, took her back to her own schooldays. She hesitated at a huge sliding door that was partially open and looked inside. It was the chapel, its altar warm in the glow of candles, the expression of the Virgin Mary flickering from above. Dark oak benches and kneeling rails rested contentedly empty.

"You would like to go in?" Sister Marion asked gently.

"No. Oh, no thank you," Angelique hurried on into the office.

"Sit down while I wash. One moment."

In the leather chair Angelique relaxed and listened to the shuffling peace. Her eyes drifted around the room seeing three walls of books, two chairs, a cluttered desk and a large crucifix on the wall. Her eyes clung to it. Perhaps if she went to confession ... how good to be absolved of everything. What peace to be able to start again with God behind her ...

Sister Marion returned.

"I have brought some clothes," said Angelique.

"You are very kind. I will have someone bring them in." The nun's rough, red, gentle hand reached for the bell on her desk which immediately brought the nun who had opened the gate. "Bring in the clothes from Madam Brougham's car and put them in the sewing room please, Sister Agatha. Now," Sister Marion looked into Angelique's face. "You look troubled. Are you all right? Your little boy?"

"I am well enough. My little boy came home and left again. He is no longer little I am afraid." Angelique gave a tiny shrug.

"The children grow and leave. Mine too," Sister Marion waved toward the door. "We can only love them and give them what we can. But it is hard. Your husband?"

"He is well. The workers are being troublesome but it is the times."

"Ah yes, I have heard. Like children they cry to their guardians to set them free. Men wish to rule themselves capable or not but God will do what is right. I know we will be sorry to leave."

"They would make you go?"

"They may. For a time every white face will be suspect, even ours, and if it causes my dear island people to hurt themselves and do evil they will regret it is

best we leave."

"But the school?"

"We have prepared. If you notice many of our novitiates are black. They will carry on for us."

A young slightly built priest entered with an armload of books which he set on the desk.

"Meet Madam Brougham, a dear friend of ours. Father Darly."

He turned toward Angelique and appraised her with a sweep of slate gray eyes set among peaks and crannies suprising in one so young. He touched her hand with his and it felt like a turkey's claw. Angelique drew quickly away.

The sound of a bell echoed through the halls and the priest cocked his head. "Confessions await me." With a quirk of the corners of his mouth he rushed off.

"I must go too," said Angelique knowing that Sister Marion was always overloaded with work. She wished she could ask just to sit here quietly for a time. She needed the peace of this place. She stood up.

Sister Marion came around the desk and took her hand in both her's. "Come again soon, child, and thank you for thinking of us."

For a moment Angelique wanted to throw herself on that holy bosom and be comforted. Bare her soul and not be

alone any more. "Good-bye, Sister Marion," she said from the door.

The nun was already bent over her paperwork.

Angelique walked slowly through the halls while the bell tolled softly, insistantly, from its tower on the roof. At the chapel door she stopped, breathing in scents of candle wax and incense. In the quiet she heard a faint movement and looked toward the confessional, remembering the dark little space and the grill through which the ear of God listened, or so she had believed as a child. Could she receivedthat balm now? Bless me Father for I have sinned. It is my son, Father. I love him but not as I should. I crave him as a lover and now I plan adultery with another man. She imagined the priests gray eyes growing evenn cloudier, the ends of his mouth drooping, and the silence ... No it was impossible. Quickly Angelique left the building.

Giant ferns closed around her as she drove through the shaded gully toward the tourist town on the coast five miles below. The peace of the convent rode with her like the drift of spider's webs until she reached bustling Durran Bay and every day life tore them away.

She stopped at a cafe for tea. Usually she would never dream of entering such a place but there was no chance of meeting anyone she knew here and that was what

she wanted. The afternoon had left her with a vague feeling of disappointment. What had she expected? She didn't know.

"Excuse me, Ma'am, may I share your table?"

A tall pear shaped man in shorts stood over her with a fatuous grin.

"Certainly," she said, "I was just leaving." Do I look the sort a man can pick up, she thought as she went out the door, did it show already?

At last tuesday dawned and she awoke to it with trepidition. Was she being a fool? And yet it was with eagerness that she drove toward the coast.

Two cars were parked outside Last Horizon when she arrived. Damn, Melissa had probably invited her oilman! It made the whole outing seem cheap somehow. She sat in the car, putting off the moment of going inside, then she gathered her handbag and the coloring book she had brought for the children and went to the door.

Melissa met her wearing shorts and a halter top overwhelmed by enormous emerald beads. "Come in, Angela, the men are here. How cool and lovely you look in that white dress. Oh thank you, the children will love it," as she took the book. "Now come meet Hugh."

The man from yesterday's restaurant loomed toward her

all smiles, ears and a big red hand that heartily crushed hers. If he recognized her it didn't show. "Glad to meet you," he boomed. Full of movement and noise everything about him offended Angelique and she was already forming an excuse to Melissa. She couldn't possibly spend a day in this man's company. "Melli..."

"Hello, Angelique."

The young Captain came toward her and suddenly the oilman didn't matter. "Hello, Brian, I..."

The man called Hugh butted in."Melissa says you're from France. I was there during the war. Quite a place. And the girls ... whewee! Maybe I saw you there."

"No," said Angelique, "I would most certainly remember you."

"Well! How's that for a compliment?"

"I would not necessarily take it for one," said Angelique and heard Brian chuckle. She turned to him. "Would you help me move the food from my car to Melissa's?"

"Come, Hugh, we must load up too." Melissa started for the kitchen. "I thought we might drive with the top down, it's not too hot is it? It will heat up later so we should start as soon as possible."

The two of them left and Peter sighed. "He's terrible isn't he! If you hadn't come soon I should have left."

"I must admit I was thinking up an excuse to go home,"

said Angelique. "I adore Melissa but her friends do sometimes leave something to be desired."

Laughing they went to the mercedes and took the baskets holding chicken and wine from the back seat. Angelique was amazingly light hearted as they transferred them to the trunk of the red sports car and even the sound of Hugh's voice drawing closer didn't dampen her spirits.

"Here it comes," said Brian from the corner of his mouth, "grin and bear it!"

All at once Hugh was just a joke for the two of them to share, drawing them closer, and at that moment he struggled into sight loaded with baskets and hampers.

"Goodness is that all food?" exclaimed Angelique.

"Isn't Gertrude marvellous to get it all ready for us!" said Melissa carrying a couple of cake boxes. "Now watch out Hugh, don't tip that one."

"I think we're off for a week," Hugh shouted, perspiring. Ridding himself of his burdens he pulled a checked cap from a rear pocket and wiped his head with it. "Darned if I'd mind a week with these gals eh Brian?" He winked.

Angelique winced and got into the back seat of the car, Brian following her. Soon they were off. Hugh drove, talking loudly all the while, interrupting himself with bouts of high pitched laughter. Angelique tied a

scarf around her hair and settled back, intensely conscious of the khaki knee next to hers. In a rush of well-being she turned to him and he leaned close thinking she said something. The wind was too agressive for speech but he didn't move away.

Field workers looked up at Hugh's frequent blasts on the horn and the country rushed past. Brian pointed to things that interested him and Angelique felt she had known him forever, had the uncanny feeling of it all having happened before.

Once past the hotels and cane fields they sped down the coast where lush jungle growth dipped to the water's edge and fishermen worked on dugout canoes and hung nets to dry in small white-sand bays. Hugh stopped at a shack and bought four soft drinks which they drank under the solomn stare of a group of islanders. A child approached with his hand held out. "Money," he said.

Angelique hated Hugh for giving him a dollar.

"Why not?" he asked seeing her disapproval in the mirror.

"They are good people," said Angelique, "I hate to see them turned into beggers."

More eager-eyed children were already coming but a sudden downpour sent everyone scurrying for shelter.

"Quick, the hood!" shouted Melissa, pushing buttons on the dash. The car top rose to cover them and they drove

on, slowly now as rain pounded the windshield.

As suddenly as it started the deluge stopped. The top again lowered, they drove through a world of steam.

"Whew, it's like being in a sauna," said Hugh mopping his brow with the cap which he again put in his pocket.

The fool will get sunstroke, thought Angelique, serve him right.

"Hey, what's that all over the road?" Hugh leaned forward, peering.

"Crabs. They come out after it rains," said Melissa. "They're delicious to eat. Small but ever so tasty."

Hugh grimaced and grunted, then picked up speed seeming to enjoy the crunching that came from under his tires.

He drove too fast, pressing to pass everything in front of him, and Angelique grew tense and angry. It was as though he owned the place and she was about to speak out when they turned up a steep rough track. Ruts and jutting rock made it necessary to go carefully and she relaxed. It was quiet but for their engine and only an occasional shack dotted through the brush hinted at human existance. Conies nibbled grass and bounded away as the car came close. John Crows circled overhead.

In the stream beneath a rickety bridge men bathed, naked black bodies shining like ebony. How beautiful! thought Angelique, how I wish I could sculpt. The men

splashed water over each other moving languidly, sparklettes flashing in the sun, and they threw their heads back in laughter made soundless by distance. Like children, thought Angelique, beautiful children!

"I could love this country," said the soldier beside her, and a great warmth filled her heart for the land and for him.

Hugh's gaffaw broke the magic. "Don't look now, ladies. Look at bulls like that and you won't be satisfied with fellows like us!" His laugh shrilled out and the bathers looked up. The scene lost its innocence and became static.

"Do you have to speak like that?" said Brian.

"What do you mean? Just kidding though you must admit it is a bit raw for ladies to see a sight like that."

"Melissa spoke up and the habitual playfullness was missing from her voice. "It is natural for here and we live here, Hugh. Now come on, we're almost there."

Stone pillars, weeds poking from their crannies, appeared to the right of the road and the car turned in to pass through a tumbled and wild garden, stopping in front of the imposing Great House "Trallee." How ever could Melissa dream of selling such a place, thought Angelique, as the big house awaited them, calm and proud, like a gracious hostess.

"Let's go inside," said Melissa.

"Bit warped in the old joints, isn't she?"said Hugh starting toward the front steps.

Angelique and Brian hung back. It was quiet with the others gone. A bee buzzed nearby, roses soaked in the sun and the air was sweet with fragrance. Slowly they climbed the stairs and Angelique ran her hand over the head of one of the carved lions who crouched, guarding, on either side. It almost felt alive. "This house feels well loved," she said.

"I bet you believe in ghosts," said Brian.

"Today I think I do. Perhaps the old lady is still here."

"Perhaps."

"Come on you two," Melissa called coming to take Angelique's arm. "I must show you Grandmother's marvellous silver!" She led the way to an inner room where she slid aside a panel to show a shining tea service, candle holders and monogrammed cutlery. "Is'nt it absolutely devine!"

"Do you leave it here?" asked Angelique.

"It's safer that at home. No one comes here and if they did they'd never find it." A voice called from outside. "Hugh. I'd better get back to him, he's fascinated by the pump Grandfather designed." She hesitated and her face flushed. "I apoligise for bringing him, Angela, I

didn't realize what a boor he is. I've never seen him in the day time you see and things are different at night."

"I understand," said Angelique.

Melissa gave a rueful grin and left in the direction of another shout.

Alone in the house Angelique and Brian wandered silently from room to room, examining the antique furniture, the exquisite carving in a dark corner, the smooth turn of a balustrade. Sadness hung in the air as though the place grieved some inevitable future and it made Angelique want to open the shutters and let the sunlight in, whisk off the dust covers that haunted with ghostly shapes, promise the house it would live again.

The wide staircase took them to the second floor and she saw it was growing dull after a lifetime of polishing. In the first bedroom a window was broken and bat droppings covered the floor and next door rain had stained the ceiling. As they entered the third bedroom a large framed mirror faced them and Angelique saw herself, a girlish shape in the gloom, and behind her came the soldier. As naturally as breathing she turned to him, pressing against him, feeling his kisses on her face. Her soul dissolved and not a word was spoken.

They heard voices on the stairs, parted and were at the window when the others came. Brian had opened

one shutter and though they looked across fields and trees, broken stone walls and untended garden Angelique saw none of it. As Melissa chattered she heard only the fluttering of her own breath and the flame that consumed her told her she was a complete woman again. Her soldier had held her and she loved him.

"Let's eat," said Hugh.

They went down and out into the sunshine, carrying food and drink to the arbor where they sat on wooden benches where long gone people had once rested to look over their beloved land. Now Angelique was grateful for Hugh's garrulousness as she sat wrapped in wonder at what had come over her. She glanced at Brian and saw the pulse racing in his neck.

"Where do you come from, Brian?" Hugh asked.

Angelique didn't need to listen to the reply, she knew all about him, from when he was the smallest child. How gentle his voice...

"I guess you foxhunt and all those English things," said Hugh.

"When I get the chance," Brian replied evenly, "I expect you chase long horned cows and all those Texas things."

"Sure thing," Only too eager to talk Hugh was off on a long discourse.

Angelique leaned against Brian's shoulder and watched a whisp of cloud cross the sky. It disappeared. Why couldn't beautiful things stay that way. Surely sometimes they did?

She and Brian walked to the car hand in hand and when Angelique saw Melissa looking at them with a pleased glint in her eye she didn't mind at all.

The ride home was bliss. With her head resting on Brian's shoulder and his arm around her she closed her eyes as though asleep but was aware of every moment, savoring the joy of the rough uniform against her cheek, the familiar smell, and the sound of his voice murmuring, "Angelique, Angelique."

Just before they reached Last Horizon he roused her. "Will you come to Polo on Saturday? We can go for dinner afterward. Even those two days of not seeing you will be too long."

She looked into his eyes. So earnest and filled with longing. "I will be there."

She refused Melissa's invitation to come in for a final drink and it wasn't until she was at home showering for dinner that she realized she hadn't thought of Peter since morning. She sang the Marsailles as water poured over her.

She floated through the next two days, all her thoughts

on the young captain. She gave herself a facial, saw that her tan was perfect and hardly noticed Naomi's now almost obscenely protruberant abdomen. Sometimes it bothered her that she couldnnever quite remember Brian's face. Always there was the uniform and the tall strength, but however she tried the features remained hazy.

"I fired the yard boy this afternoon," Leland said Friday night at dinner.

"Luther?" Angelique looked up. "Why?"

"He's been upsetting the rest of the workers. Pushing this independance nonsence. I don't want him on the property so if you see him tell him to bugger off. He's a troublemaker." He prodded the food on his plate. "You know I don't like ackee."

"You do not have to eat it."

"Did you see the news? Bastards shot Hall, chap who raises cattle on the south coast. Not a likeable man but it makes you think."

Angelique looked out the window. It seemed so peaceful. Nothing must happen now - not when she was just beginning to live again!

CHAPTER XIV

"Cara, iron this scarf, quick!"

The black woman ran from the room and Angelique smoothed on her stockings and creamed her hands. Her hair was a sleek coiled helmet and when the maid returned she took the flowing lime green scarf and tied it loosely at the neck of her white jersey dress. White elbow length gloves were next and finally the wide brimmed hat that spoke of Ascot and garden parties. She smiled into the mirror pleased with what she saw.

It was cool in the mountains and the forest appeared dark and secretive where white mist trailed across the highest points of the road. Angelique remembered Sister Marion saying they might all have to leave the island and she knew she didn't want to go. This was home now, this land of soft voices and rushing streams, she hadn't realized until this threat had come. She had always thought she was homesick for France - how strange. She remembered the times she rode alone in the early morning hearing drums, watching the sun rise over palm fringed hills ... Panic knotted her stomach - perhaps it would never happen.

As she left the mountain for more populated areas she looked at the houses surrounded by rampant flower gardens, buses crammed with people, black and brown, men and women, tall, short, young and old. They belonged, she was the foreigner who could be forced to leave despite her wealth and social status. Morbid thoughts for such a perfect day - what a thrill to watch polo again! Once it had occupied every Saturday and she had watched, proud and excited as Leland played. He had been good - why had he stopped? She couldn't remember. Brian would look good on a horse. There would be the wives with their cakes and punch, Old Colonel Walker - no, he must have died by now, he was old then.

The road was blocked with stopped cars and far ahead she saw blinking lights. A siren wailed. She tapped her fingers on the steering wheel and hoped this wouldn't make her late, she had timed everything so perfectly.

A boy on a bicycle came from the direction of the commotion. "What has happened?" she asked him.

"Tis a small boy. A car hit him. I fear he not see sunset."

A chill shot through Angelique and she saw Peter lying crushed by a car's tire. It was habit to think this way, a habit she must break.

The car became an oven and she regretted not having turned

on the air-conditioner. She took a map from the glove compartment and fanned her face then turned on the radio but, hearing a blast of political rhetoric, shut it off. A mummified old woman edged by and looked at her with milky eyes. A fat man in the next car slapped his whining boy and made him cry.

At last they began to move. Angelique beeped at the donkey cart in her way and when she passed the scene of the accident tried not to see the scattered school books in the road. The wail of a woman pierced all else.

Angelique turned up a side street to escape the traffic but the mother's cry stayed with her.

The familiar gates of the army post took her into a well-remembered world. She hadn't realized how much she had missed it - this little piece of England.

The emerald turf of the polo field lay ahead with its unchanged club house and its porch filled with spectators. Above it a Union Jack hung limply against a brilliant blue sky. Angelique parked and powdered her nose. It was as though she'd slipped back to those early days. The smell of crushed grass ... the ripple of applause.

"Mrs. Brougham?" A young corporal stood beside the car. "Captain Beresford asked me to meet you and see you to a seat." He opened the door for her.

"How did you know it was I?" Angelique asked walking beside him.

"The Captain described you Ma'am," the corporal smiled slightly, "He said you were French and beautiful."

They went up the two steps of the club house where Angelique sat in a canvas chair while the corporal fetched her a glass of punch then excused himself and left. Angelique nodded to several acquaintances and settled back to watch the game already in progress.

How familiar it all was! Smack of stick hitting ball, thudding hooves, pattering applause and scattered remarks from the spectators. "Oh bad luck there!" "Good play!" "Go for it!" The snorting of ponies as they galloped close to the boards, moaning at a goal just missed.

She recognized the players on the civilian team. Tiny Naylor had taken Leland's place. The Regimental team, of course, had changed but there was Brian, face tense with concentration. He did look fine! Angelique held her breath as his chestnut was shouldered roughly by a bay, then she almost cheered as he broke away and swung his stick under his ponies neck sending the ball straight toward the goal. The bell rang as it went through, signalling the end of the chukka. The eight riders left the field heading toward their grooms and fresh ponies.

Angelique was approached by a white haired retired

Major. "Good to see you here again, Mrs. Brougham." He chatted about the quality of the game and complained about the latest cricket scores from England. Others joined them and the Corporal appeared to refill Angelique's glass. A breeze wound the flag the other way around its pole.

The next chukka. The only difference to those other years was that this time Angelique cheered for the Army. Now she thought of it it had never seemed right for Leland to play on a civilian team. Perhaps that was why... She clapped as Brian thwarted a civilian goal, gasped when a pony stumbled, was angry when one player cut another's lip with his stick.

At sound of the final bell the teams lined up, ponies made zebras by black sweat, striped with lather. The riders removed their helmets and wiped their faces with large handkerchiefs. The award was presented, grooms led the blowing horses away and the men entered the club house, bringing the heat and excitement of the game with them.

Brian stood in front of Angelique. "I'm glad you came."

"So am I. You played marvellously. I arrived late, there was an accident."

"Not you... were you...?

"No, no. A child. Nothing to do with me." For a

moment Angelique heard the mother's anquished wail then it was lost in the gentleness of the Captain's smile.

"Let's have tea, I think the ladies have some brewed." He guided her toward a table loaded with homemade cakes and cookies. An officer's wife presided over a silver tea-pot and poured into dainty cups. Brian and Angelique took theirs over by the rail.

"Isn't that chestnut I played in the last chukka grand? Only four - acts as though he's played forever. You should have seen him the other week ..."

Angelique listened, sipped tea and nibbled cake, loving the talk, the smell of horse and her soldier's sweat. Loving the enthusiasm in his voice, the chatter around them - it was like a dream.

"Angela!" A turkey-hen of a woman billowed toward her, the red frills of her blouse ruffling at her neck. "How marvellous you look! It is such a joy to see you. Just between you and I the quality of these saturday afternoons is deteriorating dreadfully. Not the playing, I don't mean that," she said hurridly, glancing at Brian, "Just some of the people aren't quite ..." She rolled her eyes expressively. "I've just come back from London. What a joy to be among the civilized again, you don't know... Met Lady Tibbets and she told me ..."

"I'll go change. Back as quick as I can." Angelique heard Brian whisper.

"...absolutely marvellous - must be seventy if she's a day ... Oh George, I was just telling Angela ..." The woman's banty cock husband joined them to be followed by towering Tiny Naylor who took control of the conversation by telling Angelique about his mare. "Bred her myself from the old mare, Topsy, remember? Got a full brother to her at home I'm starting to work with."

Angelique loved it all. The talk of horses and past matches, scandal about those who were not present, flirtations not meant to be taken seriously. It was like watching an old movie she had once starred in.

As she listened to the account of a visit to the opera in London Angelique's gaze drifted past the ladies in their filmy dresses and picture hats and stopped on the backdrop of jungle clad hills. Would this be one of the last performances of this long running British play on the boards of the isolated clubhouse? Was a different way of life gathering forces to boo them off stage? How strange and unreal it all was, the English voices and ways. Angelique realized that no one had mentioned Leland. She supposed it was the same when he was with one of his lady friends, her name would be tactfully avoided. How very civilized. It was as though the blustering master

of Brougham Hall no longer existed. An involuntary shudder swept through her.

"Someone walk over your grave?" said a bristle-browed Colonel. "Here, let me get you another cupp'a."

Angelique began to look for Brian's return. Surely he had had ample time to change by now, and then suddenly there he was, in uniform, coming toward her. When he joined into the conversation it felt the most natural thing in the world to have him next to her.

Eventually the crowd thinned. Remaining cake was packed away and final drinks poured.

"Do you think we might go now?" he whispered.

"I think so." She was grateful for his concern 'though she had given no thought to what people might think and as they walked toward the parked cars she once again had that feeling of déja vu. "It was strange being back. I enjoyed it immensely," she said taking his arm. She gave one last look behind them at the beautifully cared for lawn and the clubhouse. Wind caught the Union Jack, fluttered it wildly, then dropped it to hang again limply against the pole. "Shall we take my car?"

"It would be more comfortable than my old citroen," Brian said with an apologetic frown.

She gave him the keys.

They drove up Cloud Mountain saying little, content

in each other's company. Jungle gave way to coffee trees and tall pines. The air grew chill and clouds surrounded the car seeming to Angelique to cut off the future and the past. They emerged into crisp, clear night where stars flickered and an almost full moon seemed close enough to touch. Clouds beneath them tucked the island in a rolling wool blanket so the mountain peak now seemed an island.

The lights of Cloud Mountain Inn welcomed them and when they went inside the warmth was comforting. The dining room was lit by flickering candles and when they were shown to a table against the wall the shadows assured privacy and they felt alone.

They toasted each other over sherry and smiled with delight when they both chose the same entree from the menu. They talked about poets, authors and music, paintings and foreign places, and when a dark haired girl sang to a guitar they knew that her tune would from now on be theirs. Although Angelique never tasted the food she ate nor the wine she drank she knew it was perfect.

Finally it was time to leave and they stood outside, hand in hand, strains of music trailing very faintly after them so it seemed born of the breezes. The clouds had cleared and looking down Angelique saw the island shaped like prowling animal at their feet. Suddenly she was afraid and vividly aware of its power to take away that

which was most dear. It would not take this new joy of hers! She defied it but her heart beat in fear.

"You are shivering," Brian's arm went protectingly around her. "Come to the car."

"No," said Angelique pressing against his side, "I could stand here forever. It is extremely beautiful, no?"

But they did go to the car and as Brian drove carefully down the mountain she leaned against his shoulder and the fear left her.

They stayed that way after they had parked behind Brian's Citroen. "I must go," Angelique said, stroking his khaki sleeve.

"I hate to think of you driving all that way alone."

"I know the road well."

"I can't see you tuesday. I have manoevers. My next pass will be for the tuesday after. Can I see you then?"

"Oh yes," she whispered and they both quietly mourned the wasted days to come.

He turned her face to his and kissed her. "I want you, Angelique. "I love you. Can we be alone sometime - spend the day, just the two of us?"

"We have a cove. Come there." She told him the way, and the darkness so trembled with their passion that they scarcely dared touch each other.

The drive home passed in a dream and the world in Angelique's headlights was all beautiful and new.

Leland was in bed asleep but she scarcely noticed him as she lay listening to the nightingale that sang outside their window.

Days passed with Angelique in a state of euphoria, constantly aware of the soldier who loved her - And yet there were moments, often when she first awoke, when she was confused and troubled for she could never picture his face nor remember the exact words he had spoken. Even when she tried very hard all she saw was the tall trim body in Captain's uniform and heard the purring of his British voice.But the worries evaporated in the sun and she counted the days with feverish anticipation.

Melissa phoned. "Meet me for lunch, Angelique?"

"I am too busy. Perhaps next week."

"Did you go to polo?"

"Yes. I must run, Melissa, I will call you." Angelique hung up, not wanting to share the magic of her feelings.

Her happiness brought new life to the house and Naomi's smile returned. Leland talked more, lingering over his meals. They even joked together over some small thing and for a second Angelique suprised herself by thinking he looked quite nice when he laughed.

One afternoon she rode Harpoon up to check World's End and when she had been through the house she dropped down to the cellar-like maid's room and, leaning against the door jamb , imagined Brian sitting on the cot, his uniform blending into the dimness of the room. She saw him coming toward her, face hidden beneath the shadow of his cap, and he lifted his arms to her in a familiar, beloved way ... oh how she wanted him!

Retreating to the front of the house she sat in the wicker rocker looking out to sea.- The sea they would swim in tuesday. Someday they would be together every day and she would care for him, cook for him and listen to his problems. No one would ever think of them apart. Perhaps he would be transferred to England and they would ride to hounds and she would help train his polo ponies. Angelique shook her head. What bubbles! And yet there was no harm in dreaming...

Hoofbeats sounded from the drive and with a flash of irritation she saw Mr. Landy on his mule. The animal looked foolish and lop-eared, yawing against the bit as he stopped it at the bottom of the steps. "Is everything all right up here, Mrs. Brougham?"

"Yes, of course. There is no need for you to come, [redacted], Mr. Landy."

"I was just riding by and saw fresh hoof prints."

The pleading in his eyes aggrivated Angelique even more. "I am quite capable of taking care of the place, Mr. Landy. I enjoy coming here to be alone, sometimes. Why do you ride that old mule?"

"My mare is getting old and this mule is a tough and wise friend, Mrs. Brougham. He serves my purpose. Good-day." He touched the brim of his hat and rode away.

Angelique knew she had hurt him but he had no right spying on her, interrupting. Oh well, she should get back and have Miss Martin arrange a hair appointment for monday. And Cara should run an iron over the dress she would wear for the symphony tomorrow.

CHAPTER XV

When the symphony came to Durran Bay everyone of any importance attended. Most to be seen rather than to listen.

"You look lovely, Angela," Leland said as he helped her from the Rolls in front of the theater.

How Angelique wished it were Brian praising her! They would make a fine couple for was not a handsome man yet another ornament to a woman, and his eyes her mirror?

Inside the hall was aglitter with diamonds and appraising eyes. Angelique nodded graciously to those she knew as she and Leland passed down the aisle to their seats. Jane Downey waved from where she sat beside her husband. Her lover sat rigidly two rows behind. The orchestra began to tune up - that delightful plethoric of sound that always sent a shiver of anticipation through Angelique.

When the performance began she was immediately absorbed in it, lifted by the music so all else was forgotten until the disappointment of intermission .

In the crowded bar people she had spoken to at the polo match now talked to her and Leland as though they

had not seen her for months. As Leland discussed crops with a politician who knew nothing about them, Joseph Tregaron spoke to Angelique about music. Melissa flirted in a far corner with an asthetic looking German whom Angelique had heard was violin teacher at the school, and small squeals came from a blond film star who was on the Island making a picture.

"She's not a patch on you, you know."

"Pardon?" Angelique's eyes swung back to Tregaron.

"That actress. No quality ... but if you won't have me I must make do with second best. Is that the bell? Time to get back to our seats."

Poor Doris, Angelique thought as she saw the actress cast a meaningful glance at Tregaron. She wondered if Leland had affairs with women like her and if people ever said, Poor Angelique. No. They knew she didn't care. She was too proud, too elegant, to be sorry for. She had made sure long ago that those words would never be said of her.

Music again took hold of the evening. Pure and powerful, soaring, diving, soothing. Carrying its listeners back to Europe and the cultures that had bred them. The performance ended. Curtain calls were applauded and the audience glittered its way out to the street. As they left the lobby Angelique felt a hesitation in the crowd

ahead. Usually the soft night air held only the sound of cicadas, now when they reached it there was a harsh voice and blaring music.

In the middle of the road in front of the theater Angelique saw the now familiar van with its speaker and excited crowd. Silence fell as the two groups faced each other. Like a distant rumble of thunder a voice began to repeat one phrase, growing louder and louder, until the Islanders picked it up and made it into a storm that buffeted the huddled whites. "White folk leave us be. Let us rule our own countree."

Concert goers hurried to their cars, faces like clown's beneath the artificial light as women clutched their jewels, and the men their women. Angelique's backbone went rigid with anger and she refused to hurry. Why didn't someone do something! Cowards! She saw the line that formed beside Leland's mouth when he was angry. Was he also afraid?

In the Rolls she looked at the back of Roosevelt's head. It looked stubborn and arrogant. "Drive on," she snapped, without waiting for Leland to give the order.

No words passed between them until they were getting ready for bed.

"Bloody bastards! Ought to be whipped!" Leland finally blurted. "Stirring everyone up. They'd better

not start anything on this property that's all I can say."

"Why did you men not do anything? Where were the police?"

"It's all politics. If we stay calm things may work out without bloodshed. Everyone knows that and tries to keep the cover on. This island could blow sky high once one of us does the wrong thing. It's the kind of fighting I don't enjoy, Angela, but I want to keep this property. It's my world and if lying low is the only way, I will do it."

He got into bed and went through his usual proceedure of shaking and turning his pillow, coughing and finally lying still. But his eyes stayed open staring myopically at the ceiling .

Angelique brushed her hair. He was right. There was nothing to be done but wait.

"I think I'll buy more land and grow cane." Leland said to the light fixture above him.

If he couldn't defy the Islanders he would fate, thought Angelique. "You should get a Busha, everyone else has one."

"I run my own property. I need no Busha."

"I think I will get a glass of milk." Angelique left for the kitchen and stood at the door looking over the lawn. Hero lapped water noisily from his dish

then lay down with his front paws crossed, ears pricked as he watched her face. The moon was on the wane and Angelique pulled Cook's stool into its silvery path and sat sipping her milk. Two days. Hero cocked his head to one side. Had she said it aloud? Nothing mattered except that Tuesday arrive safely. That was more important than all the uprisings or political battles in the world!

Only when she was sure Leland slept did Angelique go to bed. She couldn't bear to have him touch her now. It was as though she saved herself for her wedding night.

Next day, Sunday, they attended a luncheon given by an old couple who came to the Island every summer and baked themselves to a resemblance of burnt leather before heading home to Canada.

Bells rang out from the churches Leland and Angelique passed on their way and men, women and children, all wearing spotless white, crowded toward the open doors. The disturbance outside the theater last night seemed a dream against this peaceful scene and looking at the soft spoken folk Angelique knew they were incapable of violence. Those round eyed children could never throw stones. She settled back in air-conditioned comfort . An old woman caught her

eye and spat onto the road.

Tomorrow! - just today, Monday, to get through. Angelique took a spoonful of banana covered with rich cream. "Will you have Roosevelt pick up the new maid at two-thirty, Leland? She will arrive from St. Mary's by bus."

"Let her walk." He noisily stirred sugar into his coffee.

"It is three miles in the hot sun. She will be carrying a suitcase."

"They're used to it. No good spoiling them. By the way Tregaron's invited us to go sailing with him Saturday." Folding his paper Leland left the terrace.

A hummingbird, long tailed like the one she and Peter had watched, hovered over a salvia and Angelique remembered the search-me-heart flower. The old woman had been wrong, it was better not to delve into the heart's secrets, they might prove too painful. Better to float and be happy as she was now. A house lizard scurried across the ground and up the wall of the house, slithering in through a window. She must get busy and hurry the day along. At least her hair appointment would fill some time.

When she emerged from James' perfumed attentions Angelique looked toward the poolside bar and was dis-

appointed to see it empty but for a couple of tourists. She would have enjoyed a chat with Jane or one of the other women she sometimes met. Melissa would still be in bed. She supposed most of the others were away on vacation and Jane overseeing the care of her house like a good little wife. Oh well, she would go to Port Dolores and see if the material was in.

"Why yes, Miz Brougham Mum, it come yesterday." The gray old woman thumped the roll onto the counter. "It be a little more than I tell you." The old eyes were cunning and anxious.

"How much more?"

"It be twenty pounds altogether, Mum."

"That five pounds extra, Dinny. I think that not right." Angelique handed fifteen pounds across the counter and the dry fingers snatched the money.

Angelique crossed to the grocery store and bought some imported biscuits and a jar of brandied cherries. Then she pondered over the wine. There was plenty at Brougham Hall but tomorrow she didn't want to take anything from there. Soon she stood outside holding her purchases and wondering what to do next. It was only one o' clock. The town was quiet, just one old man sat on the anchor in the square and a scrawny tiger-striped dog scratched fleas on the post office steps. With a sigh

she went to the car. At least there was no threatening paper fluttering from the windshield this day.

In no hurry to get home she drove slowly. Her eye was caught by a new sign on the roadside. "Jones Guest House." About time, she thought, the old one had been almost unreadable. On a sudden whim she turned up the once familiar track remembering its steepness and the trees that touched overhead. The tires skidded on loose gravel and as she skirted the edge of a deep hole she could hear Leland's complaining voice. "Why on earth don't they fix this road? It's a wonder they get anyone to stay here." But they had stayed, for a month while Brougham Hall was being got ready, and they had loved it. Peter had been conceived there and they had visited often after he was born. Then Leland had decided it was not seemly for Angelique to be on such affectionate terms with the Jones.

The car with one last push reared from shade onto the level and Angelique looked up at the tall wood-frame house with its layers of sagging verandahs. It hadn't changed at all. Leaving the car she started up wide steps and was met at the top by a very neat, almost skeletal brown woman who raised her hands in suprise. "Mrs. Brougham!" It had always been "Angelique" before. "What a suprise! How good it is to see you, you will have lunch, come."

Angelique followed the frail woman she had once loved

as a mother and sat at the same table she used to so long ago.

"It is cool and you always loved the view."

No questions. Just a quiet acceptance of change.

"Fish with turtle soup first - you will like that?"

"That will be lovely, Mrs. Jones." Angelique looked through tree tops toward the distant sea dotted with boats. Everything - the sights, the smells, the sound of Mrs. Jones bringing her lunch were so familiar they made her dizzy. And the food when she tasted it ... She had changed so much since then, young and vulnerable, so full of love - but nothing here had changed. Mrs. Jones had probably understood what had been hard for Angelique at the time. A white woman of her prestige could not be friends with such as she, it just wasn't done. Leland had forced her to learn but it had been a painful lesson. Still they had been good days.

A spluttering engine broke into Angelique's reverie and in a moment the red bearded Englishman bounded up the steps. "Hello, Mrs. Jones luv, have you had a good morning? It's fair starved I am!" He thumped down at a table and then noticed Angelique. "Well, hello again."

"You know each other?" asked Mrs. Jones rushing out with a glass and bottle of beer.

"After a fashion, you might say, although we haven't

rightly been introduced. They call me Mr. Pat. I'm an artist - and you?"

His boisterous manner amused Angelique. "My name is Angelique and I come from France." Now why had she said that? It was as though she meant to wipe out all those years between. She wondered if Mrs. Jones had noticed. "Are you enjoying the Island?" she asked.

"Aye, it's champion. Gets in the way of my work though. I explore in old Miranda when I should be getting on with my mosaics. It's an assignment for Oxford. Supposed to be done by September. Wall of a new building. Mrs. Jones here looks after me so well I'll never want to leave."

"I know." As she said it Angelique thought she saw a shadow cross Mrs. Jones eyes and she knew she had cared and been hurt, understanding or not. "Where do you explore?" she asked.

Mr. Pat ate as though he hadn't seen food in weeks and it wasn't until he'd taken a great swig of beer that he spoke again. "I drive somewhere, anywhere, and park. Take off through bush. Meet the friendliest folks." He spent some time on the plate Mrs. Jones refilled. "Yesterday, down a trail by the sea I met a couple. White. Proper characters they were too. They'd taken an abandoned sugar mill - made it into a house with their own hands. Started years ago, young then I guess. Old and

stringy now - but happy. See it in their faces. Showed me over the place. Made furniture and everything just from parts of the mill. Want nowt else. I envy them."

"You would enjoy to live that way?"

"Nay, I'm a wanderer. Been up the Amazon, hitchhiked most of Europe and Asia. I'm bit, and once bit you stay bit, always looking toward the next place and pining for the last." He stood up and looked out at the view. "Time for siesta." He turned to Angelique and his electric eyes pierced hers. "Come up some morning, you can come with me." He strode away stopping again to say, "Not before eleven. Have to work till then."

"I would like to go with you."

"Good!" He was gone like a gust of fresh air.

Angelique held her wrists against her glass of iced tea and looked into the tan liquid. Strange to have someone ask her to go hiking of all things! It was as though he didn't see her newly coiffed hair and immaculate clothes, saw instead the girl who used to sit here. Of course she'd never go.

"He a fine old man that Mr. Pat. I hope he stay a long time," Mrs. Brown said clearing his place.

"I did not think of him as being old," said Angelique.

"Oh no. He not like Mr. Jones and me. I call him old 'cause of the beard and he so wise. Here come Mr.

Jones now. Don't he look fine?" The woman's eyes gleamed with pride as she looked at the enormous very black man dressed in a white suit who came toward them.

Though he greeted Angelique warmly she felt a reserve that had never been there before. He went to stand beside his wife.

"I must go," said Angelique. At one time they would have made her stay and they would have talked, like family, over lemonades. Now Angelique paid her bill and said goodbye.

She saw them in her rear view mirror as she left, standing hand in hand watching her, and for a moment she envied the bearded artist who wandered and made friends with whom he pleased. But then what did he have? Probably not much more than what he stood up in. Angelique admired the rainbow reflection of her diamond as it shimmered across the dashboard of the Mercedes.

A mile or two from home a tall black girl trudged along the side of the road balancing a scuffed red suitcase on her head. Leland really should have sent the landrover for her, thought Angelique as she passed.

"The new girl arrived safely, Naomi?" she asked at dinner, taking boiled plantain onto her plate.

"Yes Mum, she sleep my place."

"What name has she?"

"She called Uri, Mum."

"Uri? I have not heard that before."

"No Mum, it longer by law. Nurses in hospital name her when she born. Uri not know it not a nice word to be called until she too old and already christened, so she cut it short."

"I see," said Angelique. "You show her what to do in the morning."

"Yes, Mum."

Peter would laugh, or perhaps he's be angry at the nurses. Anyway she would write him tonight, stories like that filled a letter nicely.

The last of a downpour flung its rain into the morning face of the sun causing icicle reflections to shiver on the wall of Angelique's bedroom. She had been awake for what seemed hours, hearing Leland get dressed and then listening to the storm. Now at last it was time to get up and Cara waited to lay out her clothes while she showered.

An hour later, dressed and perfect, she ran an emory board across her nails, then held her hand out for inspection. She smiled to see how it trembled. "Not long now," she whispered.

As she left the property she saw Mr. Landy riding his

mule along the side of the road. She waved to him and for a brief instant as she passed, felt his eyes on her face, reading it. Angelique laughed at the road ahead. "You could never guess, Mr. Landy," she said aloud, "your sharp eyes could never guess the bliss today holds for me." With a roar the car surged ahead.

The veldt held no interest. Was Brian ahead or behind? She was early, there would be time to straighten her hair and compose herself. But he was waiting for her, a tall young soldier standing at the end of the road. Angelique stopped the car and ran, was lifted in his arms, kisses covering her face like the tumbling fall of rose petals and her eyes were wet with joy against the khaki of his chest.

They carried the picnic basket Naomi had packed to the hut and then she showed him the beach. "Is it not beautiful?"

"It is! I think it's the most beautiful place I've ever seen." But his eyes were on her.

They walked hand in hand, knowing they had the whole day and when he kissed her his breath was sweet and she hungered for him.

"Shall we swim?"

Back at the hut they separated to go into the changing rooms. Angelique listened to him moving about and smiled.

What foolishness when soon they would know each other so well, every nook and cranny of each other's bodies.

"I'll meet you in the water," he called outside her door.

She resisted the impulse to call him in to her. Patience. His steps were a promise in the sand and then she heard the ripples as his body entered the water. Her heart beat noisily. Soon he would hold her, so very soon now...

Slamming the door of the changing room she ran out and down the beach. Water ringed her ankles, then her thighs and she dove, porpoiselike, to travel silently beneath the surface to where he waited. She popped up laughing beside him.

The laugh froze on her lips, the sound of it torturing her ears like a scream. Facing her were the wet head and bare torso of a stranger. Where was her soldier? She couldn't breath for panic as her soul shriveled and turned to dust. The young man, seeming to notice nothing, kissed her and swam playfully away. Angelique hurried to the flat rock and pulled herself onto it, sitting with knees pulled up to her chin as she stared into the water.

"Come on!"

She paid no heed to his shout as suddenly understanding rocked her. It was Peter she had expected! Peter for whom

her body craved, to lie beside on this rock where they had lain before. To have him make love to her. "Oh Peter, Peter," she moaned knowing she was lost, betrayed by her own perverted passion.

Jumping to her feet Angelique fled through the echoing rocks and along the beach. She heard Brian calling and ran on into the hut where she clutched her belongings and dashed toward the car.

Two wet hands grasped her wrists and she looked up into the stranger's face.

"Angelique, what is it? What's the matter?"

"You are not him," she whispered. "I am sorry." Wrenching loose she flung herself into the car .

She noticed little of the journey. Only once when she jammed on the brakes to avoid a cow did she surface, and then she rested a while with her head on the steering wheel. She travelled roads not caring where they went and when, to her own suprise , she drew up in front of Brougham Hall she left the engine running and rushed inside to fling herself face down on the bed. Racked by great shudders her teeth chattered and she wished she could die.

For a long time thoughts banged about her head. She would send for him, no matter what happened she must have him, and who would know? No. She must not!

She would not! Never!

Calm came suddenly. She sat up and noticing she wore only her bathing suit pulled on a robe. Her fingers were too weak to tie the sash that trailed across the bed beside her. She was so very tired... Listlessly she raised her head.

A photograph she had never seen before was propped on the bedside table and she reached to see what it was. Angelique stared in horror as Peter's eyes smiled lovingly up at her.

CHAPTER XVI

"I find it, Mum, when I tidy your drawer this morning. It mail you forget to open." Cara stood in the doorway with fresh towels draped over her arm, looking toward the portrait. "It Master Peter. He so handsome."

For the first time Angelique noticed the letter also on the table and fearfully her hand crept toward it. "You read this, Cara? With "Personal" written on the envelope?"

The maid had to lean forward to hear what she said and for a second her face was puzzled, then broke into a wide smile. "I not know how to read, Mum."

"Of course, of course. I need you no more today, Cara."

"Thank you, Mum."

Angelique waited until she heard the door shut then unfolded the white page. Timidly at first, then faster, she read:

Dear Mother,

Uncle Ben gave me this and I had

one made up for you. It's a photo
of Dad, around the time you met him
I guess. Doesn't he look like me?
Apart from the uniform - I don't
ever intend to wear one of those ...

Angelique read no more and her eyes turned back to the photograph. The uniform, yes, the uniform, she hadn't noticed it. She went over by the window and holding the picture to the light studied every detail. "Leland," she whispered at last, "It is you," and then with a feeling of wonder and discovery, "It has always been you - never Peter nor the officer - I thought ..."

His eyes smiled and the mouth was sensitive and kind.

"Oh Leland, there could never be anyone else, it was you I searched for all the time." Suddenly light and free it was as though she had vomited all the poisons from her being and stood clean and healthy once more.

She remembered Leland as her father had carried him wounded and hurting from the wood, his uniform torn and stained with blood. "Quick, we must hide him in the cellar," Papa had said and she had run about excitedly fetching blankets and water and bandages. They had lain him on the cot and she, so innocent and young, had looked at the Englishman's pale face and told herself she would remember

forever how he looked at that moment. It had been her job to care for him and she had dressed his wounds and fed him. Then one day they had looked at each other and known they would never part. He had depended on her and loved her there in the damp cellar, and she would have died for him.

"Oh Leland, where are you now?" she whispered, pressing the photo to her breast.

Car tires scrunched on gravel and lying the photo face down on the bed Angelique ran outside to where the Jaguar had just stopped. Joyfully she swung open the door. "Leland!"

He looked up at her, mouth gaping suprise, eye-glasses blank reflections. A bead of perspiration rolled down his flabby cheek and landed on his collar. "What is it Angela?" His voice came from a ginger mustache.

Angelique backed away. "Nothing. Nothing."

He looked at the swim suit under her open robe. "Swimming so late? Hey, Roosevelt!" he called to the approaching chauffeur. "I don't like the sound of this engine, check it over and have the Bentley ready for ten tomorrow morning."

Pulling her robe tightly about her Angelique walked back up the stairs and through the house to their room. The beloved face in the photograph stabbed her heart with

loneliness. Where are you? Where are you? Hearing footsteps she picked the portrait up and hurried into her bathroom where she hid it behind her cosmetics.

She had forgotten to eat dinner - time had gone so fast - perhaps she had sent a message with Cara, she couldn't remember. She got ready for bed and lay there watching her husband undress. Saw his slack jowls, the map of veins from too much whiskey. A strand of oily hair fell forward showing the sparseness beneath. She saw the blue-white flab of his belly and heard the thickness of his breathing. Revulsion spread through her and hatred clutched at her stomach.

The bed sagged beneath his weight. He turned his pillow, coughed, and lay with the mountain of his back toward her. Angelique looked at it with loathing, then eased out from under the coverlet, retrieved the photograph, and escaped to the lawn where she sat on the stone wall overlooking the valley. Hero rested his chin on her foot.

Leland's youthful face, lit by moonlight, promised her the world.

She sat there all night while fireflies landed unnoticed in her hair. With the first hint of dawn, an awakening breeze, and beat of distant drums she returned to the house, soundlessly gliding along the halls to their

bedroom where she stood looking down at the sleeping man.

Had this really been he? She searched for any similarity in the side of the face not hidden by pillow and could find none. How could there be nothing of that young man left at all, what had happened to him? A terrible sadness flooded her very soul with the salt of endless tears and then the anger came, fierce and vengeful, chasing everything before it like a storm over the hills as Angelique realized her answer. As surely as if he had taken a gun to that young soldier the man who now slept so innocently had obliterated him with greed and prejudice and lust. "You could have kept him but you did not care. You let yourself get fat and ugly. Widowed me, changed me so I almost did terrible things!" The figure stirred under the venom of her whisper and she stepped back. He didn't care - that seemed the worst crime of all. "I hate you," she said. "My God, how I hate you!"

Freed from the fears that had lately plagued her she thought of Peter as she showered and knew he was her grown son, nothing more. And the soldier? Poor fellow, to think I never saw his face! She held her face into the spray. "Oh Leland, if only they had been you!"

The Colonel, no longer could she even think of him by Leland's name, joined her at breakfast and she felt

the hairs on her neck rise as he entered the room and her food stuck in her throat as he bellowed for Naomi to bring his eggs.

Instead of eating Angelique found herself watching him, loathing the slurp and swallow as he drank coffee with his top bristly lip slightly puckered, faint smacking as he chewed toast, rasp of napkin over mustache. Then that little jerk of his thumb as he flipped his lighter and lit a cigarette, watching smoke for a moment as it formed a perfect ring ... and the clicking at the back of his throat as he read the paper was unbearable.

"I shall have Cara move your things to the front bedroom," she said. "I wish to sleep alone, your snoring disturbs me."

He looked at her over his paper, blankly. "All right," he said and returned to his reading.

Hating his presence she found herself unable to leave it and the ache that crawled up the back of her head stayed until she watched him drive away through the drive gates. With him gone she returned to the photograph, remembering and filled with the softness of dreams.

The Colonel's return drew her to him, making excuses to be where she could watch him, despising the puddly way he walked, the arrogance of his speech, and feeling physically ill from the scent of his cologne.

Each day was the same and she remained ruled by this strange compulsion. Ignore him, she would command herself, go on as you did before when you hardly noticed if he was home or not. But as soon as he returned she would be at the window.

"Roosevelt will have the Rolls at the door at ten," Leland said as Angelique watched him put too much marmalade on his toast.

"Could we not take the Bentley? It will be a long wait for him when he could be working here."

"I want him to drive us."

Angelique wished she could think of an excuse not to go. A day of watching Leland play the fool aboard Tregaron's yacht seemed more than she could bear, and being shut with him in the back seat of the Rolls...

Her head throbbed miserably as they drew into the Marina and the gust of sea air when she stepped onto the dock brought a measure of relief. She took a deep breath.

"Ahoy there!" shouted Tregaron from the bridge of his yacht.

He looks like a little boy in a sailor costume, thought Angelique.

"Ahoy!" Leland replied and grasping Angelique's

arm hurried toward the gangplank. His fingers burned like acid on her skin and as soon as she could she twisted away.

Two other couples were already seated with drinks in their hands and Doris Tregaron flapped toward the newcomers , wind attacking her loose blouse and slacks. "Hello, hello. Welcome aboard. You know the Lewis' and the Montagus."

Everyone kissed everyone else. "Hello. Hello. Lovely, lovely. Superb weather." Twittering effusive welcomes. Acting out the charade herself Angelique watched the Colonel, hugging, kissing, saying foolish noisy, no-things. He loves this, she thought as she took a drink from the waiter dressed in mock naval uniform.

Tregaron left his game of being captain to join his guests and with a churning and shuddering of engines the ship reversed, then headed through the gap in the reef toward open sea.

The women sat in deck chairs talking while the men were louder, leaning against the rail.

"I have this marvellous new cook," Dorothy Montagu half closed her green eyelids in appreciation,"stole her from Mabel Faraday actually - and she is a dream! I had a dinner for twenty-five ..."

Angelique appeared engrossed in this story but in

reality it was her husband she listened to.

"In the army," he was saying, leaning back, chins pompous as he watched the drink swirl in his glass. (How many times she had seen these same mannerisms.) "We had a way of dealing with men. We told 'em what to do and they bloody did it. No humming and hawing about it. One time I remember ..."

Already he had taken over the conversation with his stupid reminiscences. Must bore everyone to tears. Oh do give someone else a chance, she wanted to shout. A burst of laughter broke from the group around him - they were as much fools as he.

Dorothy Montague still droned on about her cook. Suddenly Mr. Pat's face floated across Angelique's mind. He wouldn't stand here listening to this nonsense.

"Isn't it funny how things turn out and poor old Mabel's in a snit."

"She will recover," said Angelique. "I think I will look for some fish."

"You won't see any, it's too deep here."

"There may be a chance." Taking her drink Angelique went to the stern and looked down into the churning frothing wake, blue, white and beautifully violent. She tipped her glass and watched the ice fall to be caught in a thousand whirlpools, glint and disappear. How sensible

and different Mr. Pat was, though she could remember when she had thought everyone like him - like her father. She turned with her back warm against the rail and through her dark glasses contemplated each of the people on the deck in front of her. Socially vivacious masks hid whatever was real in the women's faces, their hands smooth and untouched by toil, she looked down, like her own but not as beautiful, and the men - paunches, sagging faces, behaving like school boys but without youth. If Mr. Pat suddenly appeared among them with his brusque, friendly manner and scruffy clothes they would laugh at and then ignore him. Yet he was more man than they - probably a man of passion not mongrel-dog lust. All of them were English, what made the difference? Was it that Mr. Pat held onto the dreams of youth while these others had forgotten theirs?

Angelique returned to face the sea. The shadow of a big fish undulated by, silent, powerful. A Portuguese man-o-war floated a dangerous glutinous rainbow on the surface, and far beyond lay the island, green and self-contained. A whisp of smoke rose from beside a hut in front of which small figures bent over nets. What was it like to be the woman inside that primitive home, preparing food for her man, hearing him at work outside - probably that was her whole world right there. What if

I - Angelique ran her tongue over the salt spray on her lips and wondered if the sunscreen she wore protected her complexion satisfactorily. She looked again at the hut and laughed at herself.

"Angela, come join the party," Doris called.

Food was brought from the galley. Chicken, cheese, ham and salad. Jellied tongue, asparagus on ice, fruit and champagne. Light chatter, tap of fork on plate and delicatessen aromas floated in the canvased calm on which the sun beat down and the wind tugged and worried. A record was put on the hi-fi and couples began to dance, laughing as a wave threw them off step.

Angelique hated being crushed against the hot stomachs of these men, responding to their jokes and flirtations. She looked over Tregaron's shoulder at the sea and imagined how pleasant it would be just to swim alone in the rustling quiet of it.

Her husband's face bobbed by, red and perspiring, eyes like marbles, hand too low on his partner's back. Once she had danced with a young husband who had held her tenderly, face glowing with love ...

"I am sorry, I have a terrible headache. Do you mind if I sit down?"

Tregaron saw her to a chair where she closed her eyes and rested in the sway of the sea.

"What was the matter with you today? You were rather a wet blanket, weren't you?" said Leland as they drove home in the back of the Rolls.

"Just because you all behave like fools, must I?"

"What?" His face went crimson and his eyes slid to the chauffeur. In a low voice he began, "I..." then sat bolt upright, eyes staring glassily ahead. The click in his throat started and continued until Angelique was conscious of nothing else and clenched her fists beneath the scarf she held in her lap.

At home she went immediately to her room, telling Naomi on the way that she would want no dinner. She locked the bedroom door and leaned against it feeling the tension ease. Her eyes went to the young Leland's portrait on the bedside table and she went toward it, sitting down and staring into the face that looked back with an expressionstender and slightly questioning.

"It has been such a day, darling, not like the fun we used to have. Do you remember the walks in the rain, at night so the Germans would not see you? Your leg hurt and you leaned on me. Did you know how my heart beat to have you touch me?"

Memories came tumbling and when she slept it was to relive old times so she awoke in the morning with them still about her.

After breakfast she called the new yard boy. "Get the brown trunk down from the storage room over the garage and bring it to my room."

Hero brought his ball and dropped it at her feet, standing back to look at her with one lip tucked into a grin.

"No, Hero, not now." Angelique left the table and went to her room leaving the dog with head and tail drooping, alone on the terrace.

Angelique made her bed.

"Oh Mum, that my job!" Cara appeared rigid with disapproval.

"I was in a hurry," said Angelique. "I need to put things on it."

"You should call me, Mum."

At that moment the boy pushed in with the trunk precariously balanced on his back and before long Angelique was alone with it. She took the key from her bureau and turned the lock. With the lifting of the lid her past poured out in a jumble of long ago smells, for here she had stored all that had once been important to her. She had banished them, with her feelings, many years ago.

One by one she pulled out memories. Ribbons won at her first horse show, a shoe from her pony, (French soil still blocked a nail hole), a purse she had taken

to her first dance. Inside was a piece of chalk, a lace hankie, one franc, a pink comb and a withered daisy. She remembered the bush it was from at the corner of the house. There were school annuals and souveniers from trips. A shawl crocheted by her grandmother and a wooden spoon carved by her brother. At the bottom were photo albums and Angelique lifted the first onto her lap and opened it, smiling to see herself a leggy schoolgirl in long black stockings, tunic and panama hat. Mama and Papa, in another snapshot, stood by the front door, trapped by the shutter to stay forever in that happy moment. Angelique could remember it, smell the honeysuckle and hear the bees. Mother had joked about her holding the camera straight. Now there was nothing but a headstone left of them.

There were photos of herself: sitting on top of a windy hill, laughing, with hair blowing long across her face; In heavy winter clothes that left only her eyes peering over a striped scarf as she carried a bucket of hot water to thaw the garden tap; A blurred collie ran beside her, then the dog alone, told to stay, and not wanting to. "Dear Bonbon," Angelique stroked his head. "This second of time was stopped for you, but you too are gone."

One page held a formal portrait of herself taken

in the photo studionon the main street of their little town. How she had hated posing for it but Papa had insisted. Angelique looked closely at the self-concious young face that seemed not to know whether to laugh or cry. She had read so many books, that girl, and had become so many heroines, filled with ideals and hopes, romance and adventure, happiness that lasted forever after.

"Are you still somewhere inside me?" Angelique whispered,"or did I kill you as Leland was killed?"

The eyes laughed and Angelique felt a stirring in the kernal of her being and knew the girl was still there. Going to the mirror she took the pins from her tightly coiled hair and brushed it loosely about her face. She saw that her hands were dusty and a fingernail was broken, usually enough to ruin her day. A lightness came into her heart and she exchanged the album for another.

This held the first photos of Leland, brown prints taken by a friend on outdated film processed when she had returned with her new husband to England. Their wedding in the tiny chapel she had been christened in. One wall had been destroyed by a bomb so it was almost like being married outside and a lark had sung all through the ceremony. Leland stood handsome in his uniform. She remembered that he limped quite badly and his face though still pale was beautiful. Like an Angel's she had thought.

She remembered touching it with her fingers. How happy they looked! She a little shy, he not seeming ten years older. Angelique relived those forgotten moments and finally came to the last picture taken of them waving from the deck of the ship as they left England for the Island, Leland full of studies on how to run the plantation he would buy, both full of hope, excitement and love.

But, Angelique leaned close to the photo, was there not a shadow in Leland's eyes - of pain or loss? Was his smile a little strained? She had been overjoyed to have him free of the army, but what had he thought? He had never said anything ... His father had offered him some of the military portraits of his ancestors but he had refused them.

There was a medal somewhere. Angelique reached again into the trunk. She had fairly burst with pride at the presentation. Heroism above and beyond the call of duty. He had been proud too. She pulled out a uniform, packed carefully in tissue paper. It was the one he had been married in, he didn't know she had kept it. Trousers, jacket with bars and regimental badges, khaki shirt, belt, tie, and finally the officer's cap, but no medal. It must be lost, what a shame.

The uniform lay like a ghost across the bed.

Angelique sat beside it and her hand stroked the familiar material. She lowered her head to the coat's shoulder and began to weep, softly at first then with abandon, grieving for her love and youth and all the dreams that had died. She could hear his voice whisper and soothe, "Angel, my Angel."

CHAPTER XVII

She awoke feeling chilled and wondered for a moment at the clutter that lay strewn about her. Remembrance came and she stroked the rough sleeve beneath her cheek feeling strangely peaceful as though she were among friends. A door closed somewhere, the servants were arriving, a new day had begun.

Angelique carefully placed everything but the uniform back in the trunk and it she hung inside her wardrobe door so when she opened it it was as though "he" stood there.

Songbirds called. Quickly she washed, dressed and brushed her hair, then ran outside. The lawn was wet with dew and she made a trail across it. "Hero! Hero!" How bright the flowers looked. "Hero? Where are you, boy?" A spider's web quivered mistily between two stalks. "Hero." The dog crouched under a bush, giving only the merest thump of his tail for his attention was elsewhere. Angelique followed his mournful gaze to the pen where the Colonel played with the shih tsuis.

"Oh Hero, can you not forget him?" She turned the

the big head toward her. "Come now, have breakfast with me."

Reluctantly he followed to the table on the terrace and while Angelique ate her bananas and cream she fed him most of the hot food. He stopped chewing when his master came to the table and, ignored, dropped the bacon he held and lay with his head on his paws.

"Better do something about that new maid, Angela. My best white shirt has a blue stain on it that wasn't there before."

"I will speak to her."

"Look at that hedge. Year after year I tell Job to keep it level with the wall ..."

His complaining tore the veil that had softened her morning and Angelique felt the anger returning.

"How difficult is it really? Just one straight sweep but the bloody fool ..."

Angelique set her cup down half full. "I have things to do." She left the table and hurried indoors. In the center of the drawing room she stopped and relaxed her clenched fists. What did she have to do? The maid, Uri, came in and began to wax the floor. Angelique left for the dining room where Naomi polished the table. The little maid stopped humming.

"You will soon wish leave, Naomi? The baby must be

close now."

"Not yet, Mum." Naomi looked down at the belly so huge on her small frame and rubbed the table with all her might, plaits bobbing, as though to prove her capability.

Angelique went to the window. The gardener crouched in a flower bed pulling weeds and she watched each one fall with a small thunk on the sidewalk. Sighing she was about to turn away when the Jaguar passed and disappeared through the gates.

For a second she looked after it then snatched her handbag from the hall table, ignoring the driving gloves that fell to the floor, and rushed up to the garage.

"I not finished polishing her, Mum." Roosevelt hustled to stop her.

"You can do it when I get back." Angelique was already in the Mercedes turning the key.

She soon caught sight of the Jaguar heading toward the coast and she followed keeping a safe distance between them, wind whipping her unbound hair unnoticed as she slowed, speeded up, passed a mule cart, intent on not losing the car ahead. Once on the coast road it would be easy to miss which driveway he turned into and she had to stay closer, but luckily there were more cars to hide among. There! The Jaguar pulled in to the

parking lot of one of the newer hotels. She waited in the road until he had parked and gone inside, then she followed.

As soon as she entered the lobby she heard his voice coming from the bar and cautiously she slipped into a seat at a small corner table hidden by shadows and lattice-work through which she could see the Colonel already with a drink in his hand, perched on a bar stool.

"Tom Collins, please," she ordered from the waitress who appeared at her side.

Her stomach was tied in knots and she was deathly afraid. Leland looked at the wall clock and then at the door. She watched his face intently, not taking her eyes off it even when her drink arrived, putting money blindly on the girl's tray. She sucked in her breath when her husband stood to greet someone. A woman sat on the stool beside him, he bought her a drink, and they talked. Angelique saw only his face, her every nerve trained on it. She heard his laugh, thick, ugly and greedy, watched his foolish expression until after a time he put down his drink and went with the woman to the elevators. Before they disappeared behind the automatic doors she saw his eyes round and hard like an owls.

"Would you like another drink?"

She looked up at the waitress and laughed, all the

anxiety and tension sliding away from her. She wanted to tell the girl everything was all right but instead she said "No, thank you" and smiled at the cherry in the drink she already had, for there had been no resemblance to her Leland in that face as he talked love to another woman - she would have died had it been there. This was truly someone else.

Light headed with relief she stood outside in the sun and before she got into her car looked up at the towering modern facade and wondered which room they were in. She thought of the photo by her bed, the gentle boyish face, and filled with love for it. He, at least, was all hers.

The ribbon of road led her unthinking until she came to the sign for the Guest House. She was already past when she jerked to a stop, reversed, and drove up the lane. It was quiet when she turned off the motor and she sat a moment looking at the friendly old building.

"Come in, Mrs. Brougham. How good it is to see you!"

The mother figure of Mrs. Jones waited on the steps. Angelique resisted the impulse to run and hug her as she used to - she had long ago forfeited that privilege - and walked up to take the worn hand held out to her. "It is good to be back, Mrs. Jones."

"You look pale. Are you well?"

"I have not been in the sun much lately."

Unlike last time, today the dark eyes did ask questions but nothing more was said. "Come and have a lime drink."

"The same as before?"

"Off the same tree. I tell you nothing changes here."

Angelique drank, looking out into the distance.

"Lunch time come soon. You will stay?"

"Yes."

"Why don't you go upstairs and visit Mr. Pat in room seven? He been working all morning - and then both come down for a good meal. He ask after you often."

"Good, I will." Angelique climbed the familiar stairs to the second floor. The house creaked, the old floors sagged and the atmosphere was as friendly as warm brown mother arms holding her. She tapped on the door that had a small curly seven painted on it.

"Come in."

The door knob was loose and it took a moment's fiddling to move the catch. When she stepped inside the room seemed filled by the unmade bed and the table at which Mr. Pat intently worked. Beyond, a door opened onto the balcony that wrapped around the building.

"Sit down. Be with you in a mo'." He didn't look up.

There was no where but the bed and Angelique sat on the edge wincing at the cat-cry of springs. Mr. Pat's hair looked as though he had run his fingers through it many times and his beard seemed frazzled with concentration. Angelique tried to smooth her own hair, wanted to comb it and check her face but daren't move. The only sound was the huesh-huesh of Mr. Pat's pastels. She tried to see what he worked on but couldn't quite make it out.

"There!" He swung his chair to face her. "Good, you've come. I want your opinion about these."

Obediently she went to him and he spread out six pieces of paper. "Tell me which you like best."

"I know nothing about it."

"You have an artistic face." He picked up a pipe and began to fill it from a battered pouch.

Angelique looked at the mosaics in front of her, for each paper bore a complicated design of colored squares. After consideration she found she did like one better than the others. "Here, I like this."

Mr. Pat looked, puffing gently on his pipe. He smelled like her father and she noticed his sweater had a small burn hole in front just like Papa always had.

"Good," he said. "Thank you. Now you just sit

down again and we'll drink a toast."

"To what?" she asked.

"Why, to our being friends of course!" And his blue eyes laughed at her as he opened a small case and took out two bottles and a couple of glasses. "Would you please wash them."

She went to the basin in the corner of the room, rinsed the glasses and brought them back to hold while he poured gin and a splash of bitters. She sat back on the bed.

Mr. Pat began to talk. About his art and then his travels. Angelique asked questions and the drink she had expected to dislike slipped down with the stories. She couldn't remember when she had felt so comfortable.

"Here, you must meet my friend." Mr. Pat interrupted himself as a green lizard climbed up the table leg and sat by his elbow puffing out his orange balloon of a chest. "Herman has been here since the second day I arrived. Bit of an art critic I think."

"How do you do, Herman?" said Angelique and laughed as the little eyes glittered at her wisely.

A distant bell rang.

"Dinner," said Mr. Pat. "We'll go for a drive after. Wash your hands if you like."

He treats me like a child, thought Angelique, I ought to be offended but I am not. In fact it is rather nice for a change. She used the unscented soap and rough towel, then waited while he did the same.

"C'mon, I'm fair famished!" He said, opening the door.

She was too, she soon discovered as he kept serving her with more from the dishes Mrs. Jones smilingly brought. Other customers arrived and the verandah came alive as laughter and happy talk strung like beads from table to table. For one fleeting instant Angelique realized she and Mr. Pat were the only whites - then she forgot it again, joining in the laughter that followed a man's story of his wife's learning to drive.

Mr. Pat swilled down his second mug of beer. "Well Lass, shall we be off?"

They said goodbye to everyone, waving as they rattled away in the rickety pickup.

"My that meal was fun!" said Angelique. "I do not know when I laughed more."

"Does you good," said Mr. Pat changing gears, "you look a sight better than the first time I saw you."

"Like this?" Angelique ran her fingers through her tousled hair.

"Aye, but then I never was much for fashion plates."

They clattered and roared from one rough road to another and Angelique never gave a thought to where they were going. Mid-day heat enclosed them and when they forded a stream a splash of water felt good on her arm. Once, not thinking, she put a hand on the dash board for support down a steep bumpy slope, but quickly snatched it away from the scorching metal. They stopped beside a large native woman who trudged barefoot carrying a bundle on her head.

"Hop aboard," said Mr. Pat jerking his head toward the truck bed behind them.

Grinning, the woman clambered in to sit like a great Buddha for several miles when she tapped on the glass and they let her off, beaming thanks, at a nowhere crossroads.

"Almost there," said Mr. Pat driving on.

The road ended without warning at the steps of an old stone church. A small explosion of shacks clustered on either side. A pig grunted, lying against a wall, otherwise the place looked deserted.

"You all right?" Mr. Pat asked.

"Yes. I could have done with a cushion though. Where is this?"

"They call it Tuppenny Town. There's rumored to be a fine mosaic somewhere inside this church. Let's go

see."

Angelique followed him up the steps. The huge heavy door moaned open and chill tomblike air, smelling of dank rock and incense, clashed with the heat outside. A woman scuttled from the gloomy interior like a frightened crab. Angelique and Mr. Pat faced a crude altar over which hung a large carved Christ. Habit made it hard for Angelique not to genuflect as they walked down the aisle toward it and her fingers twitched.

"I'm going to look around," Mr. Pat whispered. "Can you find something to keep you busy?"

Angelique nodded. She listened to the echo of foot steps and then mouselike scuffling sounds as Mr. Pat searched along the walls. Above her were rough-hewn beams. Probably cut by the villagers, she thought, surely this poor parish could never have afforded outside help.

She began to explore, stealthily so as not to disturb the silence. She forgot she wasn't alone as she read inscriptions on the floor and walls. "In memory of Father Abraham 1795-1860. He loved well his people" "Charles. He carved the pews but never lived to sit on one." Angelique wandered from one to another. There were misspellings and some of the words had faded back into the stone. With her fingers she tried to decipher them.

"Ah!"

Mr. Pat's exclaimation startled her and she hurried to where he crouched like a gnome against the back wall.

"This is it."

Kneeling beside him she made out the faint coloration, and could feel his excitement as tenderly he rubbed with a cloth he periodically moistened with spit. Square by square the pattern came alive. Like a sunrise it brightened and grew from nothing to glowing beauty with the colors, soft delicate pinks, yellows, tangerines, seeming to pulsate and intensify until they covered a large portion of the wall. It was a magical thing to watch.

"Splendid!" Mr. Pat breathed when the whole mosaic was retrieved from the dust and grime that had hidden it. "Splendid, now I must get it down." He took a box of pastels from his rucksack and settled himself with a pad of paper against his knees.

Angelique drifted back toward the altar. It was so simple, so pure. This time she did cross herself as she faced it and she looked up into the shadow eyes of the wooden Christ. Deep they were and full of love. She became lost in them and a prayer rose to her lips, the simple Lord's prayer of her childhood. It said everything and when it was finished she stood in the loving quiet knowing

that the eyes she looked into absolved her of her sins. Tears wet her cheeks. Tears of joy, and her spirit freshened to Spring after a long Winter.

A sound came from behind. She looked long and deep into the face of the wooden Christ then crossed herself again and went to join the artist who was putting things away.

Together they went into the sunlight where they paused while he put on the beret he had removed on entering the church. They continued down the steps into the pretense of a village. It had awakened. A group of children crowded in a circle playing toss-penny and women swept and talked in doorways. One sat in a chair and suckled her baby and in a nearby stream washing was being done. Green parrots squabbled in a soursop tree and the everpresent woodsmoke and orange blossom pervaded the air.

"It is a lovely village!" said Angelique.

"Not much to it that I can see. That is a grand church though. One of the earliest on the island."

"Does a priest come all the way up here each Sunday?"

"Not any more. Not since they refused to take that Christ from the altar. One of the villagers carved it and the people couldn't understand the priest's anger. Up till then the village had been growing, after that it shrank

to..." He gestured toward the few miserable shacks.

"What is wrong with the statue? I thought it very beautiful."

Mr. Pat ushered her into the van then got in himself and carefully began to turn without raising too much dust. "I think so too but the church hasn't yet come to accept a Negro Christ."

"I had not noticed," murmured Angelique, looking back. The old church seemed to glow, painted by the sun. Like a halo, she thought.

They travelled in silence, wrapped in comfortable thoughts, and Mrs. Jones met them when they arrived, sitting them down to tea and homemade cakes. They all shared again Mr. Pat's discovery.

The sun sank and would soon pounce into the sea.

"I must go," said Angelique, "I have enjoyed today more than you could know."

"You must come often now." Mr. Pat squeezed her hand in both his and Mrs. Jones kissed her cheek.

As she went down to her car Angelique was again the girl leaving home after the holidays, being taken back to school for an endless term. The panicy homesick feeling was the same now as then.

They both waved to her as she drove away, the stocky Yorkshireman, setting sun striking fire from his

beard, and the bony brown woman. Angelique waved back and then trees shut that world behind her.

CHAPTER XVIII

As she pulled out onto the main road a car rushed past with a blast of its horn and soon she drove in a river of headlights. Tourists travelling from hotel to hotel in search of entertainment, she supposed, and was glad to leave the coast for the quieter route into the hills.

The Jaguar when she saw it in the garage reminded her of the Colonel and his tawdry episode of that morning. He would probably be impatiently waiting dinner for her. Let him!

In her room she laughed, after the first quick flash of shock, at her image in the mirror but as she smoothly coiled her hair and changed into a fresh dress she regretted seeing that other self disappear. Windblown and casual it was acceptable in the world of Mr. Pat and Mrs. Jones, but not at Brougham Hall. Still the comfort of the afternoon clung to her like the warmth of bed on a winter's morning.

"Think I'll write to Peter," said the Colonel after dinner. "Should keep him up to date on the property

after all won't be long before he's back helping run things."

"But he ... Give him my love," said Angelique.

She went to her room and prepared for bed. It was very quiet as she lay down but she could not concentrate on the book she tried to read, memories of the drive with Mr. Pat kept floating through her mind, the kind face of Mrs. Brown, the forgiving Christ. Finally she put the book down and turned to the photograph beside her on the nightstand. The face looked out at her eager and waiting. She picked it up. "You would have enjoyed today, Leland, they are such wonderful people. It was like going home. Mr. Pat bosses me around as though he were my father and I actually let him! And the church - every stone seemed placed by someone who cared and yet a priest will not come to them. When you return I will take you there."

It started as naturally as that. What harm could come from pretending that her young soldier husband was away on duty and would someday come home to her? It gave her something to look forward to and plan for and in the meantime why not talk to his photograph? It made life so much easier to have someone.

Next morning, as the clock chimed six, she went to the pool. A bird fluttered in the hedge as she passed

and mist lay like milk in the valley. As she slid into the water, the slightest ripple sounding too loud, the sun touched the palms overhead and she swam as silently as a big fish. Refreshed she wrapped her robe about her and joined Hero on the lawn, listening to birds tune up for the orchestra of day, hearing the soft chatter of maids, the squeak of Roosevelt's bicycle. Sunlight flooded the hills and a truck roared by on the road.

"Cara. this isn't the shirt I asked for ..." The Colonel's complaining voice destroyed the pleasure of this awakening hour and with an irritable shrug Angelique went indoors to shower and dress.

Yesterday morning seemed to have released her from the compulsion to watch her husband, now she only wanted to keep away from him, and as soon as possible after breakfast she rode Harpoon up the hill behind the house, escaping before his presence and the emptiness of Brougham Hall could drag her into the despond that yawned so hungrily after her.

The forest she entered shimmered and rustled with life and when she came to the field beyond she let Harpoon have the gallop for which he yearned, laughing as he shook his head like a colt and lashed out with his heels. He raced like a wild thing, three times around.

"Steady, fellow," Angelique pulled him in. "I

do not want you to get too hot." She ran her hand up his mane and the horse played with the bit and danced for a moment. "This life is too quiet for a champion. Poor boy, you should be doing important things, getting your picture in Horse and Hound." She guided him down a steep bank to a stream and then followed a path beside the rowdy water. A John Crow soared overhead and a cow bawled in the next field which was Mr. Landy's. "You would like a drink? As long as you have stopped puffing ..." Harpoon's ears flicked backward and Angelique jumped to the ground. As the horse plunged his muzzle into the ripples she knelt beside him, cupping her hands, also drinking. It tasted good, far better than the boiled water in the house. She patted wet fingers over her face. A lizard returned to the rock he had fled when they arrived and did pushups. Angelique put a hand to the back of her neck, letting coolness drip inside her collar. It was getting hot, she must go home.

The sun had not yet sucked all coolness from the forest and Harpoon moved through green shade with his long swinging stride, swishing his tail at the flies that followed him. As they rounded a corner he snorted and stopped, ears strained ahead.

"What is it?" said Angelique, holding him from wheeling around.

She urged him forward and he went stiffly, grudgingly, snortling softly.

A man stood in the shadows and Angelique's heart lurched. It took a moment to recognize Luther, the yard boy Leland had fired. He leaned against a tree like a malignant dryad, staring at her until she almost reached him, then he melted into the bushes. Angelique shivered, refusing to look where he had gone, hoping her fear had not shown. "Come on, Harpoon, trot now."

The sun was welcome on her shoulders as was the sound of nearby workmen when they emerged from the trees. She decided not to mention the encounter to Leland, it would only cause trouble and perhaps meant nothing. Luther was bound to still have friends on the property, he had probably come to visit them, but still he had no right to look at her in that way, he should be punished, if she saw him again she would definitely have something done.

The stables were quiet but for the chestnut bobbing his head in welcome and Angelique enjoyed having the place to herself as she unsaddled Harpoon and took a handful of straw to rub him down. The work was pleasant and she wondered why it was so long since she had last done it. Ah yes, her hands, this work would soon blemish them and they were beautiful. She spread one against Harpoon's neck and considered it. Somehow it didn't seem important and she

suddenly realized she had forgotten to wear gloves on her ride.

"Miz Brougham, mum! That my job!" Tobe had arrived unnoticed and his face was contorted with disapproval.

"I like to do it, Tobe."

"White lady not to do work. It my job."

She handed the horse over to him knowing he was right. Had she forgotten the lessons of years before? "Make him shine, Tobe, and check his feet."

"Yes, Mum." The boy was happy again.

On her way up to the house Angelique picked a hibiscus blossom and twirled it in her fingers. Mr. Pat could do anything. The islanders would respect him whatever he did. Think him mad perhaps ...

"Mrs. Brougham?" Miss Martin blocked the path.

"Yes?"

"I'm balancing the books and I wondered ... are you sending your son's check this term?" The girl blushed and twisted her hands. Was the pimple that flared the same one or another?

"I had forgotten. I will come to the office now." Leland saw to Peter's necessary expenses but since the boy's first days at school Angelique had taken pleasure in sending him an extra check each term. Perhaps he no longer needed it having had a job, soon for sure he would

not. As she followed the girl Angelique felt again the aching loss of her child.

In the office she wrote a short note and put it and the check in an envelope. As she touched the flap to her tongue her eyes rested on the pale secretary who hunched over the typewriter. Did she have any friends or was her employer "it"? Did his infidelities hurt this plain defeated looking creature, send her weeping to bed at night? "Are you happy here, Miss Martin?"

The girl looked up, face seething with blushes. "Why, yes, thank you Mrs. Brougham."

Hero appeared in the doorway and walked up to the house with Angelique whose hand rested on his shoulder. She felt its boniness. "How terribly thin you are, Hero! I must tell Cook to feed you more. Perhaps the vet should look at you."

The big dog waved his tail and even that seemed an effort.

That night at dinner Angelique felt her husband looking at her.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"You haven't changed from your afternoon dress."

"No."

"That's unlike you." For a moment there was no

sound but his chewing. "Where is the new maid, I haven't seen her."

"She ran away. Homesick, Naomi said."

"Silly bitch," Leland speared a piece of beef. "I spoke to Leery today - said he's thinking of selling out. Afraid of the trouble brewing. Told him he was being a fool - it'll all blow over. By the way I've sent away for a couple of peacocks."

"Peacocks!"

"Thought they'd look nice roaming the property."

Fool, thought Angelique. Perhaps if he had seen Luther that morning and the hate in his eyes he would not feel so cocky. She couldn't stand fools. Why did he have to keep talking tonight - her head ached with it. Stupid! Stupid! The word exploded like little firecrackers in her brain and as soon as she could she retired to her room and found peace stroking the uniform on the back of her wardrobe door. Her thoughts grew soft and full of dreams.

During the following days Angelique was content to stay on the property. The Colonel was away most of the time and after riding and swimming midsummer heat made it easy to spend the afternoons sleeping. Thought of leaving the hills for the sweltering lowlands was unappealing and social life was quiet with people away on

vacation or staying in the cool of their homes. There was one party coming up in a few weeks, otherwise the calandar was bare.

Sometimes Angelique grow lonely and talking to the photograph seemed not enough, then she would remember that she could visit Mr. Pat and Mrs. Jones-tomorrow if she wished. One promise led to the next for she saved the visit like a child a sweet, for when she needed it most. Tomorrow ... tomorrow.

One noon the phone rang as she stood next to it.

"Angelique!" Melissa's voice floated from the receiver. "Where have you been? I've tried and tried to talk to you."

"I am sorry, I have ..."

"Never mind. I must see you. I'll be there at two. All right?"

"Of course." Angelique stood looking at the phone. How good that voice had sounded. Dear Melissa. Why had she never answered the calls Melissa had left with the maids? Ah yes ... Captain Beresford ... it would be awkward explaining and she would be sure to ask. It seemed so long ago ... it would be marvellous to see her again. They must get together more often ... perhaps next week at the new restaurant in the Hilton, it was air-conditioned.

Melissa did ask, as soon as they were sitting comfortably on the verandah with iced drinks in their hands. "What happened between you and Brian? He was frightfully upset and kept phoning to see if I'd heard from you. He was really smitten you know. Didn't you like him? You seemed to."

"He was a dear but not the one. Now that is not what you rushed up here to tell me is it?"

Melissa straightened her floppy pink sun hat and removed her enormous pink-rimmed sunglasses. "I suppose you heard about Grandmother's house."

"Tralee? No, what?"

"They burned it down, or almost. The only part left was where the silver was hidden so the devils didn't get that."

"That lovely house! Oh Melli, who did it?"

"Some islanders. Who knows. They'd had a rally of some sort nearby and high on ganja and radical talk I expect some looked for the nearest symbol of white authority and torched it. Granny would turn in her grave, she was so fond of them all. We'd almost decided to live there too. Just think if we'd moved in ... the children!"

"Oh, Melissa!"

They sat silent imagining the horror.

"We've decided to leave."

"Leave what?"

"The island."

"You could not!"

"Bill was so incensed," Melissa leaned forward, her face alight as it had never been when she talked of her lovers. "He was just wonderful, Angelique. He said he wouldn't keep his wife and children where they would be in danger. He said he didn't care how good a job he had to give up we were more important and he went right away and made arrangements to sell Last Retreat. We leave for England next Thursday, his brother's finding us a place to live and Bill's going to study for the ministry. He's always wanted to you know."

"Melissa! You a minister's wife?"

Melissa grinned and for the first time since Angelique had known her blushed. "I know, it does sound funny but I'll be a good one, Angela. Bill's better than all the other men, I know it now and I'm tired of playing around. I can understand now how you could want to be faithful, except that well, Leland..." She stopped with her fingers over her mouth.

"He was not always ... Oh but Melissa I shall miss you so! Do you want to go?"

"I'm sad in one way but it will be exciting to live in England." Melissa clasped her hands under her

chin, squeezing her fingers together, her eyes stretched wide like a child's "Perhaps we'll live in a thatched cottage and I'll learn to cook and clean, Bill says we won't be able to have maids like here, and the children will go to kindergarten and learn not to be so bossy."

Just a little girl playing house, thought Angelique with a touch of envy, then she was drawn into the excitement of imagining and planning so it wasn't until time for Melissa to leave that sadness fell over them.

"Is there any chance you might come to England too? It may be dangerous here and it would be such fun ... besides you don't look well Angela, you're too thin, you need a change."

"Leland does not think anything will happen." Angelique spread her fingers in a hopeless gesture. "I will surely miss you."

She walked with her friend to the little red car. They promised to write and kissed each other good-bye, then Angelique watched from the top of the drive, and stayed there after the road was empty listening to the purr of the engine until distance took that away too.

Under the scorching tropical sun a cold wind invaded the hollowness inside her, she felt a shell, an empty room. Never again would she see that wild unconventional figure wave to her across a crowd of stuffed

shirts, never hear those crazy amorous adventures. "Melissa, the vicar's wife," she said to Hero who joined her. "I hope it works out." She went back to her chair on the verandah and stared at nothing. First Leland, then Peter, now Melissa. How lonely the island could be. A thought warmed her emptiness. The Guest House! Tomorrow she would go. Mr. Pat and Mrs. Jones would cheer her up, she would go often ... she smiled at a lizard basking on the rail and began to hum a cheerful tune. "Come on Hero, I will throw the ball for you."

"I cannot go with you, I have other plans." Angelique firmly tapped her boiled eggs and removed the top.

"But I told Tregaron we would be there for lunch. You can talk to Doris while we complete our business. Where do you have to go anyway?"

She couldn't tell him and disappointment made her bitter. "All right, as you have already accepted, but another time do tell me sooner."

"I only saw him last night. He's worried about Doris, seems she's all strung up about this native business. He thinks you can talk some sense into her." Leland stood up and stretched . Angelique saw ugly flesh between the buttons of his shirt and heard the scratching of his mustache as he wiped the napkin across his mouth.

"Roosevelt will have the car here at eleven thirty." He walked heavily from the room.

Damn! Damn! thought Angelique. All night she had looked forward to today and now this. Well, there was always tomorrow ... but deep inside her a homesick child wept.

It suprised her to find that Leland was driving them in the Bentley. "Tregaron asked me not to bring Roosevelt. Thinks it best not to encourage talk between workers of different properties. Maybe he's right though I can't see much dangerous about Roosevelt." He accelerated with a blast of the horn between two ox carts and almost knocked over a cyclist. "These bastards should learn road sense."

Angelique wished he'd have an accident - damage his beloved car and teach himself a lesson. Tense and nervous she had a headache by the time they reached Tregaron's and it took a while of Doris' innocuous talk before it left and she felt herself again.

She looked at the drab little woman beside her who always seemed so desperately self-conscious and whose eyes constantly moved from table, to view, to her husband, and wondered if she was really interested in the foolish things she talked about. The dress incorrectly stitched by a seamstress, the incompetance of

a maid, the new material at the drapery store in Royal-town.

"Whatever is that?" Interrupted Angelique as a raw screeching sound, like a rusty weathervane in the wind, came closer and closer. A covey of plump gray birds with red patches under their beaks minced around the corner of the house.

"Oh, those are guinea fowl. Joseph thought they'd be rather fun to have around the place," Doris leaned forward as though her husband might hear from the garden where he spoke to Leland. "Can't stand them myself, dreadful noisy things. I keep mentioning to Cook how delicious they must taste hoping a few will get stolen for someone's dinner but it hasn't worked yet." She tittered nervously.

Angelique smiled and she too was watching the men. Now she knew where the peacock idea had come from.

This small confidence seemed to have loosened Doris' tongue for her face darkened with a frown and she stayed leaning forward only this time all her attention was on Angelique. "Are you ever afraid - of them?" Her eyes gestured to the house behind where sounds of singing could be heard from the kitchen. "Joseph says I'm silly but he doesn't notice how rude the people are now, how they look at me when I ask them for something - and I'm

alone so much. I'm so frightened, Angela." The eyes brimmed tears and the voice broke, reminding Angelique of the guinea fowl's screech. "Joseph says I should go to England - for my nerves you know - stay with my sister. Like your husband he'll never leave this property, it's all he knows now. What should I do?" Her whole future seemed handed to Angelique for a decision and Doris' back straightened as though free of a load too heavy to bear.

"Poor woman, thought Angelique, poor sad creature, and looking into the begging face she knew what she wanted to hear. "I think you should go, for your health. Perhaps things will settle soon."

Doris leaned even further and clasped Angelique's hand, her face bright and happier than Angelique had ever seen it. "Oh my dear, I did so hope you would say that. It must be hard for you to understand, I am not beautiful and strong like you. Oh thank you!"

Angelique felt she had just let a bird loose from its cage.

The men joined them and luncheon was served. Doris bubbled with happiness and her husband glanced at her often with a puzzled expression on his face. Leland told a story Angelique had heard countless times before told in exactly the same way in a voice too loud with ridiculous gestures . She wondered why she didn't leave him as

Doris was doing, for her health, but even as she thought it Angelique knew he would never let her go. Her beauty was his prized posession and he would giveup nothing that was his.

"Don't you like the chutney? Is it too strong?" Doris asked.

"No, it is delicious, I just remembered something I had forgotten to do. We have a mango tree that has a bad branch. I meant to tell the gardener to look at it." She must be careful, her face had always been good at hiding her thoughts, she was getting careless.

It was quite late in the afternoon when they left, and as they passed through Pickney village Angelique saw the usual clusters of people lounging about the street. From one group an arm suddenly raised and something hit the windshield in front of Leland, leaving a filthy smudge. "Damn! What was that?" he said straining to see around it.

"I do not know," said Angelique but she sat stiffly, drawing shallow breaths, until they got home and when Roosevelt took the car she watched his face but he gave no hint of what he thought, never mentioning the blemish that would usually have caused him great consternation.

Angelique locked her bedroom door and closed the

jalousies tight that night although it was very warm inside and the air would have been welcome. Tomorrow she would discuss everything with Mr. Pat. He would know if she had cause to be as frightened as she was. He would tell her what to do.

She slept restlessly, awakening to imagine stealthy footsteps or some movement in the house, and it wasn't until dawn that she fell into a deep sleep which caused her to get up later than she had planned. Not that it mattered, she told herself, Mr. Pat works until eleven and I must not arrive before then. She dressed in the skirt and blouse she had worn on her last visit and wore her hair brushed loose.

"Is the Colonel gone?" She asked Naomi at breakfast.

"He leave in the car early. I do you more toast, Mum?"

"No, Goodness what is that noise?"

"It Cook's radio, Mum."

Angelique hurried into the kitchen where the big woman and Cara sat over bowls of porridge. "Turn that down," she ordered, Music changed to news. "Now!" she said.

Cook's fat brown arm stilled the BBC voice.

Angelique felt better, she was still in command, she need not worry about her servants they were untouched by

the trouble outside.

At eleven she was on the road filled with joyous anticipation. Dear Mr. Pat; rough and honest and kindly and wise. Someone who would always understand, someone to depend on. And dear motherly Mrs. Jones. They would be like a family.

She smiled to see the dark figure appear at the top of the steps as soon as she arrived and ran happily toward it. As she got close something about the set of the shoulders and then the doleful expression on Mrs. Jone's face caused her to stop. "What is the matter? What has happened?"

Thin brown hands took hers and led her inside. "Did you not hear the news?" The brown eyes turned on her were filled with grief. "It Mr. Pat. Someone shoot him."

CHAPTER XIX

The brown face blurred. "Papa is dead," Angelique heard her mother's voice say. "A German shot him." "But the war is over!" "For some it will never end."

"Oh no!" Waves of weakness threatened as through a painful tightness in her throat Angelique asked, "Is he dead?"

"No, no, child. Calm yourself, he will be all right."

Angelique ran past Mrs. Jones, up stairs to the door with the yellow seven on it which she flung open. The room was empty, the bed made, Mr. Pat's work table bare. Only the lizard clung to the wall.

"Where is he?" she asked of the woman who had quietly followed her.

"They fly him to a special hospital off the island. He hurt bad but they will fix him."

Angelique sat on the bed and watched the lizard puff his red balloon. "What happened?"

"It some damn fool black man. Mr. Pat go exploring yesterday noon like always. They find him up a back country road, his windshield smashed and tires torn. Him

lying across the seat half gone."

"I should have been here!" Angelique looked at Mrs. Jones.

"No, child..."

"I was coming but the Colonel made me go somewhere else. Perhaps it would not have happened ... now he is gone."

"Yes, but he think of you. He leave you this." Mrs. Jones handed Angelique an envelope from the dresser. "I be downstairs. You come have tea with me when you ready."

Alone Angelique opened the envelope and took out the note scratched in pencil by a weak struggling hand. She could smell pipe tobacco.

Friend,

I think it better you don't visit Jones' until the trouble's over, for their sake and yours. Take care, sorry to leave like this.

Pat

"Oh Mr. Pat, I needed you." She sat holding the note, watching the lizard, remembering the bearded face and the Yorkshire voice saying, "Why, to being friends of course!" Eventually she stood up. "Goodbye Herman," she said to the bright lizard eyes that watched her and

as she left the room she paused to touch the crooked yellow seven.

Mrs. Jones waited at the foot of the stairs and led Angelique to a table where a pot of tea steamed. She sat opposite and poured them each a cup.

"He was a good man," said Mrs. Jones.

"He was."

"You a good woman too, Angelique."

"Oh, Mrs. Jones, I think not." The note was still in her hand. "You have read this?"

"Yes."

"I suppose he is right?"

Mrs. Jones barely nodded. "Peaceable times will return." She reached across the table and her hand was dry and soft as a bat's wing against Angelique's cheek. "Take care, child."

Angelique drove away from the Guest House without looking back, loneliness a black hollow inside her. She passed a group of women who chipped flint by the roadside, singing as they worked. Mr. Pat would have liked them she thought slowing down. One of the workers looked up and, like stones, flung the words, "White bitch!" Rage stormed in Angelique, against the woman and the ugliness that travelled like a blight, killing and hurting, changing gentle voices into screams of anger. Her hand gripped the

steering wheel willing violence, wishing to avenge her friend but a small wisdom at the back of her mind kept the car driving smoothly forward.

Mr. Landy flagged her down just before she reached the gates of Brougham Hall.

"I see you coming from far away. I picked star apples this afternoon." He handed a bag through the window, searching her face as he did so.

The gentle caring in his eyes eased her anger.

"Something is wrong?" he asked softly.

"A friend is hurt and left the island."

"I am sorry."

She forced a smile and drove on, the loneliness not quite as painful as before.

She moved listlessly through the remainder of the day. Hero followed her with anxious eyes and dropped his ball at her feet. She ignored him.

"You're not eating," said Leland at dinner, then picked up the Royaltown paper. "See this? Another Englishman shot sniffing around where he oughtn't, bloody fools."

Angelique put down her knife and fork and stared at the silver sugar bowl. She could see her husband's face upside down in its side, distorted, ugly.

"Busybodies, if they had sense they'd stay by the

tourist areas."

The mouth in the silver moved obscenely and Angelique couldn't take her eyes off it. If he had not insisted she go to Tregaron's yesterday Mr. Pat would be safe now. Abruptly she stood up, pushed Hero's sympathetic head away, and went to her room.

The next day Hero was dead.

Cara came to Angelique at breakfast. "I call for big dog everywhere but he not come."

"He has probably gone for a walk."

At noon a gardener stood at the door. "Hero dead, Mum, I find him in the flower bed. At first me think him sleep but he not wake up."

Angelique ran outside to where the great dane lay curled under a bush, nose toward the shih tzu pens. Crouching beside him she stroked a hand over his ribs. "So thin ... I meant to call the vet ... Oh Hero, I am so sorry." Her soul became all tears and those she hadn't shed for the loss of her child, for Melissa, for Mr. Pat and for herself, fell now to sparkle like diamonds on Hero's coat.

"Vet do no good, Mum," Naomi's eyes were deep and wet as forest pools. "Big dog die of broken heart. He see Colonel dote on funny dogs. He not eat much for long

time, Mum."

Angelique looked toward the drive down which the Jaguar at that moment roared. Her hands caressed Hero's head. Bastard, her spirit screamed hearing the car's horn trumpet in the distance, bloody damn bastard! "Bury him in the rose bed," she ordered the gardener.

She could hear the spade even from the front verandah.

"Do you want me to make your usual appointment with the hairdresser, Mrs. Brougham?"

Angelique started, she had not noticed the secretary's approach to the bottom of the stairs. "Oh, no- no not this week. Perhaps next."

"I shan't be here next week, Mrs. Brougham."

Angelique's attention fixed on the girl. "Where are you going?"

"My father wants me home. He worries about my safety here."

Someone cares for her. The knowlege was somehow suprising. "Come up here, Miss Martin, and have a cup of tea with me."

Crimson faced the girl came slowly and sat on the edge of a chair. Naomi brought tea and as Angelique poured she saw the girl's eyes on the emerald ring and wished she hadn't worn it. "What is your first name, Miss Martin?"

"Trusilda. Trudy they call me."

Did she have to look so terribly uncomfortable? "Trudy, when you return to England I hope you remember good things of the island. Its gentleness, the richness of its forests, the clean waters. Remember how the mountains melt blue into the sky and how its people sing and make music. Try to forget any disappointments or ugliness, these are not the island's fault. Good memories will bring you happiness forever, keep them safe like old photographs."

Silence. Had she been speaking to herself or the girl?

Miss Martin rattled her cup and cleared her throat. "Mrs. Brougham?"

"Yes?"

"I was wondering how I can get to the airport."

Angelique sighed. "Tell Roosevelt I said he was to take you."

"Thank you. May I go back to the office now?"

"Certainly, Miss Martin." As she watched the girl leave Angelique knew her memories would all be files and her employer's panting. The spade no longer dug. Salty pressure pushed behind her eyes and filled her throat. She would miss Hero. He had always been there, even when she hadn't noticed him. Another emptiness.

A window on the opposite hill flared, catching the

sun, and grew brighter magnified by her tears. Impulsively she hurried to her room and changed into riding clothes, calling to Cara to tell Tobe to saddle Harpoon. Soon she rode through the shadows of the banana grove toward Worlds End.

The house was beginning to look abandoned and its air of desertion matched Angelique's mood. She had understood Lady Lillian to say a gardener and his boy would attend to the grounds but there was no sign of anyone's having been here. A coconut frond lay across the front walk and the grass grew long. Wind rattled a leaf across the porch and the rocking chair nodded vacantly beneath the tinkling chimes. After tying Harpoon to a tree Angelique went inside. The tile floors echoed as she passed through hushed rooms. With the jalousies closed and no view the place seemed bleak and crowded with the Orient. Although almost unbearably hot outside, when Angelique reached the kitchen door she was eager for the sun and with it came the haunting smell of damp cement that drew her like a magnet down the kitchen steps and across the few yards of packed earth into the cellar room. Dust and spider's webs had collected on the one window, forming a curtain so when she shut the door behind her it was almost dark.

Suddenly she was in another time in another cement

room. She heard distant shell fire, saw her shabbily dressed father standing in the shadows, heard soft moaning from the soldier on the bed. The soldier - so hurt, so brave. She felt the tenderness of new love, the joy of working for him, carrying water, smuggling food and medical supplies, watching through endless nights, always afraid they would be discovered by the Germans. Those had been wondrous days and she had grown from child to woman. Angelique shook her head. So long ago...

Taking up a besom that leaned in a corner she began to sweep, opening the door so clouds of dust billowed into the sunlight. The wood felt good in her hand, sweat broke out across her nose and her breath came short and hard. Reaching, she knocked cobwebs from the ceiling and cleaned the tiny window so brightness flooded in showing the satisfying results of her work. The bed looked ugly with its striped mattress and soon she had it made with lavender scented sheets and blankets from the linen closet in the house. Again she went to the house and after several trips a table and two chairs stood on the lambswool rug from beside Lady Lillian's bed. After a struggle the wicker rocker from the verandah brightened a corner, then she equipped the washroom and filled a vase with yellow roses to place on the table.

A shaft of sunlight warmed the petals and spread gold over the room.

Angelique pushed a lock of hair from her eyes and surveyed the results of her labors. "A place of my own," she exulted aloud and looking at the blisters on her hands smiled. "Mr. Pat, you would be proud of me!"

It was getting late and she should be back at Brougham Hall before the Colonel. He must never know about this, her private place.

He did not return for dinner and Angelique ate alone without changing or even redoing her makeup. Her mind tumbled full of plans to make her little room even more attractive and when the phone rang it was an annoying intrusion. Perhaps, she thought as she went to it, it was the police telling her the Colonel had had an accident and lay dead in some hospital. It was almost with disappointment that she heard the female voice gushing affability from the receiver.

"I say Angela, I do hope you won't think it too simply dreadful of me but I'm cancelling the party Saturday. Harvey thinks we should all stay quiet until the trouble's over and I daresay he's right, 'though it will be a terrible bore."

"Yes, of course, I am sure it is best."

"Take care of yourself now!"

"Yes, you too. Goodbye." Angelique returned to the table and was thoughtful as she finished her apple flan. It was not the curtailment of social events that bothered her but the fact that the Colonel might think it wise for himself to stay closer to home. But no, she decided, he would never admit to danger, if he could not fight back he would ignore everything, she need not worry. Leaning back one hand dropped to Hero's head and feeling only emptiness Angelique winced and went quickly to the other room to put a record on the Hi-fi. Curtains, that's what her cellar (strange she should call it that) needed. Was there not yellow muslin left over ... she could sew up there ... take needle and thread from Cara's basket ... she had been a good sewer once.

Next morning she waited impatiently for the Colonel to leave the property but instead he went to his office. Might she not go anyway? He would think her just off for a ride ... best to run no risk, this place she would keep for herself, no meddling maids, nothing but herself and her dreams—so instead she collected things for when she did go; the pillow grandmother had embroidered, an old afghan, a bowl to put fruit in.

She was late to lunch and the Colonel looked up

with an expression of annoyance. "Why the hell did no one tell me about Hero?"

"I did not think you cared," said Angelique.

"He was my dog, wasn't he?"

"You might have shown it!" Angelique took a mangoe and went onto the verandah. His presence quite took her appetite away. She waited hoping he would surely go somewhere that afternoon but her heart sank when he left the house and strode toward the banana grove where a group of workmen waited.

It was a welcome divertissement to see Mr. Landy riding his mule up the drive. He has a nice car but he would rather ride that comical creature, Angelique mused, watching him, how strange.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Brougham, I have brought you oranges." He climbed down with a basket which he handed to her. "They are from my mother's tree." He brought this gift every year from the tree he personally nurtured and allowed no one else to touch.

"Thank you, Mr. Landy. They are always the most delicious fruit on the island. Come sit with me and have some iced tea."

"No thank you, I must get home, the vet comes to vaccinate this afternoon." He had removed his hat to talk to her and now wiped the back of his wrist across

his brow. "It be most terrible hot today - must be misery in the low country. Good-bye, Mrs. Brougham." He mounted his mule and gave Angelique a smile so sweet it brought tears to her eyes, then he rode away.

Goodness, she thought, what is the matter with me? For one who for so many years tears had been a stranger now they seemed ready to flow at the slightest excuse. She dabbed her nose with a lace hankie and took the oranges into the house. They would look cheerful in a bowl on the table next the roses.

They bumped against Harpoon's flank in a bag with all the other things next morning. The Colonel was probably already safely in Royaltown and would not return until after dark so Angelique looked forward to a long day in her own world. She turned Harpoon loose in the small paddock at World's End to graze, then carried her load into the room, standing on the threshhold a moment to savour the fact that it was exactly as she had left it. No maids had come to rearrange or tidy here.

She got to work with the window cleaners, polishes and sponges she had brought. Her arms ached when at last she finished but the room was spotless and she looked on it with a sense of pride, how Leland would

love it when he came! They would stand in the doorway, his arm around her waist, planning a future in which he would never leave ...

And so the days passed, half dream half reality. At times as Angelique sat in Brougham Hall reading or listening to music, perhaps writing a letter to Peter, she would wonder at herself and this strange passion to do maid's work. Was she crazy to imagine her lover-husband would return? She would hear the Colonel's voice shouting orders and tell herself she must stop before she went to far and began to believe her dreams. What if he found out? God, how he would laugh or berate her for her foolishness! Disturbed, she would go to her bedroom and work on her fingernails or redo her hair or makeup but in her heart she knew she only waited for the first chance to head back to her cellar room. After all, she rationalized I must amuse myself somehow.

A few at a time she took up her personal treasures; albums from the trunk, pictures for the wall, and she hung the horseshoe over the door. She even made a special trip to Royaltown for a combination lock which she snapped every time she left knowing that when she returned the feelings, the smells, the flowers in the vase, even the folds in the blankets were hers and she would sit in

the rocker and listen to the quiet, thinking thoughts she had not known for a long time and discovering herself as she once had been. It was like finding an old friend.

One afternoon when she had taken the landrover she arrived at Brougham Hall after nightfall, having lost all track of time, and it was with trepidation that she entered the house knowing the Colonel was already home.

He waited in the drawing room, a whiskey in his hand, face mottled with anger. Angelique quailed, he had found out! "There you are. That bloody secretary's gone. Just like that, now, with all the banana receipts to record."

Limp with relief Angelique stifled a laugh. "You mean she never told you?"

"Of course she told me."

"Then ...?"

"I didn't think she meant it. I never dismissed her."

You pompous fool, Angelique thought.

"Did you tell her she could have Roosevelt take her to the plane?"

"I did."

"Why?"

"Would you have her walk? She is not one of your natives you know. Anyway I would have thought you might have taken her yourself, after all..."

"After all what?" He awaited no reply. "I don't bloody pay Roosevelt to chauffeur the staff. She should have taken a taxi."

She watched the shaking of his jowels, saw the ugliness of his fury and saw the years stretching ahead with her forever trapped by his hateful presence. If only the church allowed divorce... "What did you say?"

"I said I don't want you going off the property alone until things have settled down."

She stopped the argument that sprang to her lips, no need to antagonize him, there was nowhere she wanted to go - that anyone knew about. Exercising Harpoon every day would seem natural enough if he ever found her gone, though she must be even more careful not to be late like today. "I must wash for dinner."

As she left the room he called after her. "By the way, Melissa called to say goodbye about half an hour ago. They were just leaving for the plane."

Angelique half stopped, tears jumping to her eyes, then went on.

In her room she stood in the dark looking out over the lawn so empty without Hero standing guard. The

lights of a plane moved like two stray stars across the sky and Angelique imagined Melissa surrounded by her family and the roar of engines. Perhaps a stewardess leaned across to put a pillow behind her head. "Oh Melissa." She was gone, they were all gone and to Angelique it felt as though her strength had gone with them. "Oh, Leland, come soon!"

"Angela! Angela! Are you coming? It's dinner time." That hateful voice, why was it not he who was gone?

CHAPTER XX

She slept restlessly, the full moon fingering her face and washing her eyelids open as she tossed in a world of fleeting nightmares. At dawn she arose and went to the stable where the horses snorted and pawed at their doors to see her. Soon she had Harpoon saddled and, swinging lightly onto his back, rode from the yard. His hooves clattered on the cobbles and he danced as they climbed to the ridge behind the house.

The depression Angelique had awakened with lifted and she began to notice the new day and forget the weary ache in her soul as the sun rose a blazing orange and the hills stretched one behind the other in fading shades of blue mist until the last melted completely away. Haze dissolved, restoring color, taking away the muteness of dawn, and a flight of canaries flew across the now powerless face of the moon.

Harpoon rattled his bit and Angelique let him glide into a canter, breaking spider's webs in the grass and swimming through lost trails of mist still draped in

hollows along the ground. She steadied him at the edge of the jungle trail, remembering the evil-eyed Luther, then nudged the horse forward. He snorted and pushed willingly among the tangled ferns, to be submerged in the racket of parrots and pungent green smells.

Freedom came to Angelique as the forest walls shut away the house where the Colonel still slept. Perhaps she would not be trapped with him forever - something could happen - he might die. People did, unexpectedly all the time, in car accidents, of heart attacks, drowning, or even being shot. He deserved it - and she would have no more headaches. Stop it! Such thoughts are evil! None the less they kept coming.

An orchid glowed purple trailing from a tree beside her and she reached for it but passed without picking for it would soon wither and grow ugly without water.

In the big field she put Harpoon through his dressage exercises, enjoying the controlled power as he remembered the training of his Event days, and her mind forgot everything in the concentration of changing leads, executing pivots, extended and collected paces, as though they were in front of an audience. Dropping the reins she

let him stretch his neck, and patting him, jumped to the ground. "You are wasted here, my friend, you deserve a blue ribbon in your bridle."

Harpoon pricked his ears and rippled his nostrils toward the mule and its rider who came through the gate from the next field.

"Good morning, Mr. Landy," Angelique called, thinking how well the man suited the scene before her. He was as much a part of the island as the jungles and mountains.

"You looked a picture, you two," he grinned taking off his wide brimmed hat. "How are you, Mrs. Brougham? I see Harpoon is well."

"I did not expect to see anyone this early. Is it not a lovely morning!"

"It is, Mrs. Brougham, it most surely is. I have been searching for a devil of a calf since daylight. I think he must have broken through the fence somewhere. You haven't seen him?"

"No. May I ride with you for a time?"

"Delighted," he jumped to the ground offering her a leg up and then they rode side by side onto his property. The sun was warm on their backs and his eyes darted across the land, missing nothing that moved. Angelique relaxed and Harpoon snatched at a tussock of

grass.

"The Colonel has forbidden me to go off the property alone." She looked at Mr. Landy's face but it showed no reaction. "Do you think he is right?"

Mr. Landy pulled the hat brim down to shield his eyes. "It might be best to be careful, these are troublesome times when poor people have strange thoughts put into their heads." He slapped a fly off his mule's neck.

"Some owners are selling their land and leaving. What is your opinion of that, Mr. Landy?"

"It could be wise, you may find you must go. I hope not, I would miss you." He pulled his hat further down.

A panicy feeling struck the pit of Angelique's stomach and she looked at the country around them. She didn't want to leave. "Will you go?"

"Mercy no! This is my land. I am black, Mrs. Brougham, though my white great grandfather gave me his color. Didn't you know that?"

Angelique looked at his warm brown eyes. Of course, she should have known but it had never crossed her mind. Whatever would the Colonel think? Always so determined to buy that strip of land and his offers always refused. He would never have bargained so with a black man, she couldn't help laughing. "Let us find this devil of a

calf of yours," she said.

They crossed rolling fields, passing scattered oaks and outcroppings of rock while grazing cattle lifted their heads and calves sometimes followed with noses poked forward, full of curiosity.

Mr. Landy stopped and cupped his right hand behind his ear. "Hark!"

Angelique listened and made out a faint cry. Mr. Landy already cantered in the direction of the sound and she followed him down the steep bank of a ravine to where a calf stood tangled in the branches of a fallen tree, bawling hopelessly, his pink mouth open to the sky. Mr. Landy handed his mule's reins to Angelique while he scrambled down and lifted the animal bodily free of its prison then pushed it up to the open field. How could such a slender man be so strong, wondered Angelique as she rode behind.

A bellowing cow galloped awkwardly from the herd, belligerently tossing its head at the rescuers before nuzzling its calf who found her udder and began to drink.

"There, everybody's happy." Mr. Landy wiped his dripping forehead and climbed into his saddle. "Will you have breakfast with me, Mrs. Brougham? My food may not be as fine as you are used to ..."

"It will be delicious, I am famished."

They talked now as they rode. About the property, what crops he would put in, how many sheep he could run. Angelique had learned a lot about farming from him during the years and enjoyed listening.

"You love this property, do you not?" she said in a pause.

"I do, Mrs. Brougham, I do. It is as my skin."

At the house they gave the animals to a boy and went inside. Mr. Landy sat Angelique in the, as always perfect, drawing room and excused himself to prepare the food. Looking around at its familiarity she realized what it reminded her of - a shrine. A shrine to what? she wondered.

Mr. Landy brought in the beautiful tea service and set it in front of her. Last time Peter had been here. How long ago that seemed. Toast permeated the air already sweet with spices and in a short time Mr. Landy served poached egg on toast and freshly squeezed orange juice.

"What a lovely breakfast!" she said.

His eyes shone with pleasure.

"Do you not have servants?"

"My needs are simple. A woman comes to clean and do the wash."

"May I ask a favor of you, Mr. Landy?"

"Of course."

"If anything happens, will you take the horses? I am fond of them, especially Harpoon, and would hate to think of one of the blacks ..." she stopped, embarrassed.

He smiled. "I understand. I will."

For a moment they were silent.

"I should be getting back."

"My soursop tree is heavy laden, send a man over if your cook wishes to make jam." He took her cup from her, almost reverently.

How he does love that china, thought Angelique, and they went outside.

After seeing Angelique mounted on Harpoon he got on his mule. "I will ride part way with you."

They rode slowly, it was hot now. They passed the calf sleeping next to its wild eyed mother who circled anxiously on seeing them. Angelique and Mr. Landy smiled at each other. He knew how she liked his golden cattle. At the gate he jumped down and opened it for her.

"Mrs. Brougham?"

"Yes?"

"I am always here if you need me."

"Yes, Mr. Landy, I know. Thank you."

He waited until she was out of sight and even then

she knew he watched, and felt protected.

As she passed along the humid forest trail she realized how little she knew about him. He had just always been there, someone to make fun of behind his back and go to when she had a question or needed advice. Strange he had said nothing when she asked him to care for the horses, not shrugged it off as something unlikely to happen as she had expected, instead he had quietly acquiesced as though it were all quite probable.

A shadow flitted across the path ahead , Harpoon saw it too. Nothing. Whatever it was had gone but Angelique knew it had been Luther. Why was he lurking in this way? What was he waiting for? She must say something when she got in, he must be ordered off.

But for some reason when the Colonel drove AWAY after luncheon she still had not told him. Several times the words had been on her tongue but something had stopped her from saying them.

For the last time she drove the landrover up to Worlds End, in future it must be Harpoon who took her. Over the seat beside her lay the Captain's uniform and when she reached her room she hung it on a hook she had already prepared. Standing back she gave a sigh of content, her cellar was complete.

She cleaned and dusted, put fresh water with the flowers, polished the table, all the while humming a French tune her mother had sung. Finally she rested on the bed, looking at the uniform. Perhaps tomorrow a telegram will come to say you are on your way ... She dreamed...

When she was at Brougham Hall Angelique knew that only these escapes kept her sane, otherwise the nagging throb in her head and the tenseness of her nerves when the Colonel was near would surely drive her to violence, either to herself or him. It seemed a long time since she had spoken to anyone outside but when she thought of it there was really no one left she wished to see, except for Mr. Landy, but he was different.

She did find one occupation for the hours she was forced to spend on the property. Her painting. Some years before Melissa had talked her into taking lessons from an Oriental gentleman who had arrived on the island. He was finding it hard to make a living and Melissa had taken him under her wing, cajoling all her friends to patronise his art classes. Angélique had gone once, just to please her friend, and found herself returning weekly. The instructor, a yellow husk of a man in a fawn smock, had drifted among them like a dry Oriental breeze, prompting his students in a singsong voice that was hard to

understand but which dripped gems of knowlege that often brought out completely unsuspected talent. When something pleased him he would clasp his hands to his solar plexus and smile very slowly, his face wrinkling like a shrivelled apple, eyes like slanted cloves, twinkling with delight. This silently expressed appreciation became a prize to be sought after by Angelique and as the weeks passed it came more often as she learned to handle her brushes and paints. Scenes of the island grew on her canvases and the slight Oriental whispiness caught from her instructor brought a fey magic to her work.

Then one day he didn't come to class. They waited, painted a while on their own, then went home. Word spread that he had gone back to China. An urgent letter from a deserted wife had somehow touched his conscience and drawn him homeward. Angelique had continued to paint for a while but without that crinkled smile of encouragement her enthusiasm waned and soon canvases and paints were stored away.

Now, returned to it, she became deeply involved, working long hours to capture the primitive beauty divorced from Brougham Hall and its trappings. The servants, fascinated, made excuses to pass and peek over her shoulder and she scarcely noticed them.

One afternoon as she was on the lawn working with

deft strokes in a cloud of oil, turpentine and newly mown grass she became conscious of Naomi's persistant hovering. She glanced sideways wondering if the maid had a message for her but the inquisitive eyes were fixed on the canvas. "That a fine picture of Master Peter, Mum," she said, clasping her hands around her cumbersome belly and tipping her head to one side.

"Master Peter?" Angelique looked back at the painting and saw the figure emerging from the woods onto the as yet unfinished lawn. It suprised her. "No that is not Master Peter, that is Captain Brougham."

The maid stared at the boldly painted young figure then shyly at Angelique, suspecting a joke. After a time she went away but Angelique still gazed at the painting. That is how it would be, her Leland coming to her from the trees. He would cross the lawn and holding hands they would go inside for tea, laughing and talking. After, they would have a siesta and in the cool shaded bedroom they would make love, and talk quietly, and doze. In the evening they would listen to music and watch the sunset.

Naomi called her for lemonade and biscuits and still dreaming she went to the terrace and sat down. Suddenly she stiffened, seeing the Colonel cross the lawn and stop at her painting. He stooped, looked closely, then came on.

"Who's that?" he asked, sitting down with a wheeze.

"Nobody," How could he not recognize it? The lemonade was suddenly sour and she watched the clouds boiling over the far hills, fixing her thoughts on their changing shapes, trying not to hear him chew, and swallow and breathe.

He shook a cigarette from its package. The sun sent a ray pointing toward the white house on the opposite hill, the clouds closed and the house was again invisible, but he had seen. "Have you been up there lately?"

She caught her breath. "I go once a week."

"I'll go this afternoon. Now in fact."

"There is no need, I was just there."

"Want to have a look at the place anyway. Naomi! Have Tobe saddle the chestnut."

Angelique sought wildly for something to say to stop him but she knew anything she said would only make him more adamant. If only someone would phone to take his mind off it, or a workman come with reports of trouble, but no bell rang and no one came to the door.

Frozen she sat in her chair as he went inside . She heard him take his crop from the hall stand, heard him slap it against his leg and come out, slap, slap, toward the stable. She listened when there was nothing

to hear telling herself it would be allright, he would never look in the little room. Why had she bought such a shiny lock? Suddenly she saw it, advertising her secret. What a fool she was! She imagined him going toward it, curiosity piqued, trying to open it then walking to the window, now so clean, and leaning to peer in. His eyes would search, see her photographs and finally stop on his uniform. What then?

"Oh please," she whispered and stood up. The sleek hindquarters of the chestnut disappeared into the banana grove and she heard Harpoon whinny after him. "Oh God, what can I do!" Quickly she rushed to her room and changed into riding clothes. "Saddle Harpoon, quick Tobe," she called as she came down the path from the house.

Slowly the boy leaned his brush against the wall, slowly he shuffled into the tack room. Angelique wanted to scream as he carefully tucked in each keeper on the bridle, fussed with the saddle pad, adjusted the martingale. When he picked up a brush to straighten the horse's mane she snatched the reins and led Harpoon into the yard herself, mounting before the boy could help her.

Catching her urgency Harpoon pranced and bucketed before settling to a jog. He entered the grove snorting, ears pricked. "Steady boy, quiet now."

Angelique had no plan, she knew there was no way to stop him but she could not just sit at Brougham Hall and wait. It was dark and eerily quiet among the banana trees. The sky where it showed was black and a sly breeze brushed the leaves once and was gone. A yellow bird flitted soundlessly across the path. Angelique strained to hear anything from ahead. Her nerves were tensed to breaking. Perhaps he had turned off, changed his mind, or gone too quickly. She spotted a fresh hoofprint. Harpoon snorted and she jerked his mouth angrily so he flung his head up with wild frightened eyes. "Shh, shh," she ran her hand along his crest and he quieted.

The trail divided and the hoofprints turned to the left, he must have decided to check the green-crop field on his way. She followed. A wind sprang up, thrashing the broad banana leaves as if they were the sails of landlocked ships. Beneath the roar Angelique was only' concious of the thud of Harpoon's hooves repeating over and over, "He'll find my room, he'll find my room."

High pangola grass blocked the way and Angelique stopped the horse, wary of entering the open. Purple black shrouded the sky and from one corner sunlight washed and spread across waiting hills, painting each emerald tree and bush with christalline brilliance.

To the right she saw flattened grass where the chestnut had trampled it down. One blade stirred and rose upright. Soon it should be safe to follow, he would rejoin the main trail on the other side.

The wind dropped, a bird trilled once and the smell of crushed grass rose like steam around her. Hot muggy air clung to her skin and she found it hard to breathe. Suddenly the sun was snuffed out leaving the world darkly hushed and still. Harpoon pawed nervously.

A shot rang out, echoed, and left hollow silence.

Angelique's head snapped back involuntarily and she felt Harpoon's heart thud against her legs. Nothing moved and there was no sound. She licked her lips and nudged the horse onto the new trail, her back tingling as her eyes searched. Even then it came as a shock to see her husband's body lying like a scarecrow in a web of tangled grass. Angelique sat, unable to move. Rain began to beat on her shoulders and head and she watched it darken and join with brown blood on the scarecrow's shirt and a growing pool oozed from one shoulder, spreading and melting. It was like a dream, the steady roar and veil of rain separated her from reality. Harpoon shook his head. She felt the storm sting her cheek and drew a shuddering breath.

So he was dead. Where was the joy? The sense of

release? She should do something, get someone, find who murdered him. Whoever it was might still be watching, aiming at her right now. It didn't seem to matter. The chestnut ...she must catch him, standing over there in the rain, poor fellow. Carefully she guided Harpoon past the body and stopped. What had she heard? Twisting in her saddle Angelique saw the figure move, saw the eyes open and fix on hers. Then they closed again. All the old hatred lept alive and the wish for him to die. She turned away, kicking Harpoon into a startled canter, leaving the Colonel in the mud, rain spilling into his eyes and mouth as his blood and life drained from him.

CHAPTER XXI

The chestnut, happy to be caught, trotted easily at Harpoon's shoulder along the rainpooled cart track that led directly [redacted] to the house and outbuildings. Angelique never looked back.

"Colonel stop yonder," she told Tobe as she handed both horses over to him at the stable, then she hurried indoors to remove her sodden clothing and soak in a hot tub. She lay back listening to rain beat outside and thought of that other thing it beat on in the lonely field. "I am glad," she said to the steaming walls but real joy would not come.

As she dressed workers passed and, peeking through the jalousies, she watched which direction they took. They must not find him too soon ... but they stopped by the garage and hunkered in its shelter talking.

Angelique wandered through the house, stopping with a hand on the back of the Colonel's chair. It would never hold him again and no more would she suffer his unbearable mannerisms. She sat down and tried to read but the sprawled figure floated between her and the

words. It is the shock, she told herself, I am too trained to face death with grief.

The sun shone, although black clouds still crowded the corners of the sky, and she went for a swim, up and down the pool, diving, racing through the water, but the bubbles in her ears sounded like the breath of a dying man . I have murdered him! And the thought made her laugh, helplessly, so she had to pull herself out onto the tiles for fear of drowning. There she lay, limp, her body a mass of clay she had no wish to control and she longed for the day to be over.

"Will the Colonel be wanting the car, Mum? He order it for four but he not come."

Angelique opened her eyes to see the uniformed chauffeur standing at the gate. "I think he get involved with other things, Roosevelt. You may go for the day."

"Thank you, Mum."

Angelique dangled a hand in the water and watched the ripples running away from her. How long did it take someone to die? In the morning she would report him missing if no one found him first, then she must play the part of the bereaved widow. And then Leland would come ... Why was this day so long?

She ate dinner and after dismissing the servants

went straight to bed, lying stiffly on her back, hearing rain although there was none. Wind tossed the branches of the silk-cotton tree outside, forming fragile ghosts across the ceiling and spinning webs along the wall, quickly whisking them away and starting over. Everywhere there was movement - was he still?

The clock struck ten and Angelique could bear it no longer, she must know. Quickly she dressed and ran outside, wind taking the edges of her raincoat and slapping them against her knees as darkness tried to smother the ray of her small torch.

The field seemed very far. Sometimes she appeared to walk a treadmill going nowhere and a whimper of frustration rose from her throat, then suddenly tall pangola grass blocked the way and with a strong sweep of one arm Angelique pushed it aside and entered its wet green forest. Cold blades attacked her legs and snared her feet, then with relief she found the crushed trail of the horse's earlier passing and quickened her pace. The beam of her torch ran ahead, back and forth, searching until it stopped on a pair of boots. As Angelique caught up it quivered along useless legs, lingered on a stained and rumpled shirt.

My God, it moved! No, only the wind. But the light jerked as again Angelique saw an almost imperceptible

rise and fall. She bent close and saw that her eyes had told the truth, he still breathed.

"Why will you not die?" she whispered, letting the light slide to his face.

She stared transfixed. With his head thrown back the skin lay close to his bones removing the jowels and heavy cheeks. Wet hair straggled over his forehead, and his face, bearing an unearthly palor, was streaked with mud.

"Leland!" The world spun, leaving just her and the poor wounded soldier in its vortex. Darkness pressed in on them and with it a sense of urgency. The German's would be searching ... she must get him to safety. Angelique kneeled, stroking the cold face, lying her cheek against his. "Wait for me," she said, willing his obedience. "Promise you will wait." His glasses crunched beneath her heel as she turned and ran toward Brougham Hall.

The distance, the ruts, and the rain that fell again went unnoticed . It was as though, disembodied, she watched herself flying through the night and then from room to room of the house filling a basket with cheese, bread, Marmite, cans of soup, two thermos bottles filled with hot water, bandages, peroxide, ointment, and finally a skirt and blouse. Up to the garage the

figure rushed, climbing into the landrover and hurtling up the cart track, fighting to hold the vehicle straight on the slick ground.

Now time slowed and Angelique once again felt the rain and the panic. She left the landrover at the edge of the field with the side lights on and fought through the grass barricade, her voice sounding to her own ears like a wailing sea bird as she called, "Leland, Leland." What if she couldn't find him? What if it were all a dream? Suddenly he was there and she threw herself beside him, feeling for the pulse that beat in his throat as faintly as a hummingbird's. "I will care for you, I have a place..."

Grasping his feet she began to drag him, inch by inch over the slippery grass toward the glowing side lights that seemed no bigger than fireflies. She prayed for strength to reach them. As she labored the pain in her arms and back, the rasp of her breath, numbness in her gripping fingers, were all overcome by the brass band that played in her heart, rejoicing in her soldier's return.

"Not much farther. Soon you will be warm and safe. She paused, listening, then pulled more urgently. Were those guns? "The cellar will be cosy, they will never find you there."

She leaned against the fender that was suddenly behind her and straightened, wiping wet hair from her eyes and licking rain from her lips. He was so heavy. "Please, God, help me get him in." The struggle was almost too much and once she cried out in despair, then by a miracle he was in the seat leaving her strangely light and empty of substance.

Leland's head hung forward and he bled again. Angelique drove slowly, gritting her teeth at each bump, straining to see, listening for sounds of pursuit. She thought how lucky they were to have rain as they passed through the village for it kept everyone indoors and, hearing music, she smiled to think of the German soldiers dancing, unaware of the enemy escaping beneath their noses.

Often she glanced at the young Captain beside her and her happiness was almost unbearable. "We will be so happy Leland. No one will look after you but I, and you will never leave me, never." Through all her joy the spreading stain on his shirt terrified her and she raced through streaming night up the road to World's End, braking close to the door of the cellar.

Where was Papa to help? She must manage on her own. Summoning a strength she was suprised to find she struggled Leland from the seat to the ground and pulled him across

hard slippery ground into the little room. A final heave and he lay on the low cot. Wind blew the door, shutting them safe inside and rain whispered at the window as Angelique lit a candle.

Tenderly she undressed him and wrapped him in blankets, then she coaxed hot water down his throat. Liquids, plenty of hot liquids, for the shock Papa had said, or was it Mr. Pat? No matter ... now the wound. The bullet had gone right through his shoulder but nothing appeared broken, bleeding would have cleaned it. Angelique bathed and bandaged, re-living a memory.

"There my love, you will soon mend. No one will find us here. Perhaps they will not bomb tonight. Sleep ... so pale..."

His breathing was shallow, barely quivering his nostrils, and his face bore tiny blisters of sweat, yet he shivered. Angelique looked around for something else with which to cover him and saw his uniform hanging on the wall. Taking the jacket she spread it over him. "This will keep you warm. You see you lost so much blood." Her heart surged to see him there in the candlelight, khaki beheath his chin. "Oh my Captain, my dear, dear, Captain!"

For a long time she stood with her hands clasped at her throat, looking down at him, then she pulled

the rocker close and sat, leaning forward, never taking her eyes from his face. The candle gasped and went out, still she watched, reaching now and again to touch him, concentrating on the breaths that were softer than her own heartbeat. The night was warm and Angelique never noticed how wet she was, and tired.

Dawn crept in the window and still she never moved, it was as though her gaze was the one fragile link that held him to earth. Sunlight brightened the bougainvillea in the vase and drifted to the plate of oranges, birds twittered outside, and a moth battered its wings against the day it could not reach, but Angelique knew none of it.

About noon she sensed a change as Leland's breath came slightly stronger and slower, his cheeks were not so waxen, then his eyes opened, looked at the ceiling for an instant, and closed in normal sleep.

Released, Angelique stood up, feeling for the first time the ache in her joints, but each twinge proved the long vigil was over and she was alive and Leland also would live, hers to love and care for with no interference.

He must not see her looking like this! She left him, to wash and change, humming as she combed her hair loosely about her face. Every few moments she would

stop and look out at the figure on the bed, hardly believing the joy of seeing it really there, and soon she was back at his side waiting nervously for his awakening. What would he say? He had never seen her - but he was her husband - no, that was a dream, he was just a parachutist Papa had found in the woods - but she had found him... How confusing, she was too tired, nothing mattered but that he was here.

He shifted and moaned. "Are you awake?" she whispered.

He opened his eyes, looked at her and then around the room.

Quickly Angelique mixed Marmite in a glass of hot water and knelt beside the bed spooning it to his lips. He drank and each swallow excited her with the knowlege it brought him strength. He slept again and she took his clothes to the sink and scrubbed them. Something hard fell from a shirt pocket and feeling around in the water Angelique brought out a metal object. Wiping soap from it she recognized the medal of valor she had been so proud of and so lately searched for. How strange he should carry it!

A moan, little more than a breath took her running to the bed. When Leland saw her his lips moved though he had no strength for words. She read questions in his

eyes.

"Rest, my darling, I am here. Listen - no sound of fighting."

Puzzlement shaded his face, then again he slept.

Angelique studied him and saw something that did not belong, something she must get rid of. Hating to leave she went outside, carefully locking the door behind her, and ran into the house to the bathroom off the master bedroom. Here she found razor, shaving soap and blades.

In a few minutes she had taken nail scissors from her sewing kit and crouched over the sleeping Leland. Gingerly she snipped his mustache, smoothed soap over the stubble and shaved away the remains of the ugly caterpillar. Lovingly she smiled and tucked the army jacket beneath his chin. A splash of sun danced along the brass buttons. It flashed off something else too, something outside that sent a reflection quivering across the ceiling. The windshield of the landrover!

How careless! Only pausing to lock the door behind her Angelique ran to the vehicle and drove to a nearby grove of bamboo, nosing it in as far as she could, then piling broken branches and leaves until a passerby would never guess anything was there. Hot from exertion she looked around, almost expecting to see someone come

toward her but no one came and she could hear no human sounds. Relaxing, she told herself she was lucky and swore there would be no next time for such carelessness.

All that day and the next, but for moments spent heating soup on the old calor gas stove she found hidden in a corner of the house's otherwise ultra modern kitchen, she stayed at Leland's bedside delighting in caring for him. She washed him, replaced the dressing on his wound, and fed him during brief times of semi-wakefulness, and at night she sat in the chair rocking with the creak of wicker behind her left shoulder, and always she watched him. The few times she dozed she awoke in a panic and hurridly lit a candle to make sure her soldier was still there, knowing exquisite joy as the light fell on his face.

She must have dropped off on the third morning for she awoke suddenly to find him watching her.

"Where are we? What happened?" His voice was strong.

"You were shot."

He looked down at his shoulder and winced as he tried to move. "This is not a hospital."

"No, it is safer here. The wound is doing well."

"Where are my glasses? I can't see."

"Do not excite yourself. The glasses broke when you fell. Drink some soup."

He drank it all, including some bread she had crumbled

into it.

"Now sleep so you will get strong."

"Can I take something for the pain?"

"I am sorry, there is nothing. Is it very bad?"

"Didn't the doctor - there was a doctor wasn't there?"

"Hush, you are tiring yourself."

"Christ, Angela, surely you got a doctor!"

"You do not remember...we must be careful not to be caught...no one must know we are here. Papa told me what to do. Now sleep."

"Papa?" Leland's eyes flashed around the room, stopping back on Angelique. Frowning, he began to say something but stopped and after a moment his eyelids closed. Sweat bathed his drawn face and again he slept

Looking down at him Angelique suddenly realized that she feared his getting well. He had been so completely hers during these few days ... she could not bear to have that change. She would not let it! She would keep him dependent on her whatever the means. After a time he would realize it was for his own happiness.

Making sure he slept deeply she slipped out into the garden to the tool shed from which she collected screws, a screw driver, and two parts of a latch. These

she attached to the inside of the cellar door, then, switching the lock from outside to this, closed it with a comforting snap. Now the door would always be locked and the only key was in her head. Thoughtfully she looked at the window and decided it was too small for a big man to crawl through.

"What are you doing?"

Startled, she turned to see Leland watching her. "I am making everything safe. No one can break in on us now. How do you feel? May I get you something?"

"I feel bloody frail. Who shot me? A native? Has the uprising started - of course, that's it!"

Angelique thought he looked overly relieved. Native or German, what did it matter, his mind wanders. She rested a hand on his forehead and smiled down at him. "It is a lovely day, shall I open the window? I have been closing it in the day to keep the heat out but I think the hot spell is over."

Birdsong and warm air poured in and a lizard scuttled across the sill. "That must be a relative of Herman's," Angelique mused watching the red throat begin to puff. "You did not know Herman, Leland, he lived with a friend I had before you came. Something happened to him, or was it Papa? I think they were both shot and taken away, but I will not let them take you, I will

Keep you safe!" She went to the wicker rocker and sitting down pulled material from the basket beside it. "I shall embroider curtains for the little window. They will be pretty, no?"

"But why, Angela? It's not worth the trouble, we'll be out of here in a few days. Anyway why don't you find a woman to do the work, surely they're not all rebelling."

"I love to look after you, Leland, you know that. Grandmother taught me to sew, remember?"

"Damn it, I've got to get out of here! Got to get fixed up so I can see what's happened to my property. What the hell's come over you?"

"Shh darling, you are delirious."

"I'm not! If I wasn't as bloody weak as a kitten I'd take us out of here right now. Why won't you find someone..."

Angelique left her chair and went humming to the table where she began to rearrange the flowers. "I will pick more this afternoon," she said. "Roses would be nice. I will find food too - there should be a vegetable garden..."

A loud exclaimation of pain burst from Leland and she hurried to him. "Oh darling, how it must hurt! Do not try to move, your shoulder will heal if you stay still. I will bring whatever you want and you will be

happy and forget about leaving. Now rest."

He looked at her and then toward the lock on the door, seeming wrapped in thought. As Angelique again picked up her sewing his gaze lingered on the bright threads that mirrored the ectasy in her heart.

Soon his breathing became slow and deep with sleep and Angelique left him to forage for food. There was little left of what she had brought up on that first night although she had eaten almost nothing herself. From now on she must face the challange of providing the contents of their meals or they would go hungry.

The kitchen garden was a wild tangle of vegetables gone to seed but she found some sweet potatoes and dug them from the rich earth with her hands. They would be good added to Marmite soup. Nearby trees were heavy with oranges and limes and it was with pride that, a short time later she set everything on the table, a hibiscus glowing on top, as Leland watched.

She would have been hurt when he turned his face away without a word if she had not told herself she did so out of weariness and pain.

She couldn't help a twinge of disappointment though when he ate the soup for dinner that night and muttered, "I'll be glad when we can get some decent food again."

"My cooking will improve, it is difficult at first,"

she said. "Perhaps tomorrow I will find some herbs."

"Whatever has happened to your hands?"

She looked down at the broken finger nails and ingrained dirt. "I had to dig the potatoes, but the soil felt so nice, Leland, cool and moist."

"Are you well, Angela?"

She smiled at him. "How could I be otherwise having you back! Why do you frown? Oh, Leland, you will never know how terrible it was without you. I had such nightmares ... but that is over now, there is only happiness ahead." She could not understand the mixture of emotions that crossed his face, why could he not just be joyous like her?

Next morning, before Leland awoke, she was in the garden gathering more potatoes and some leaves from bolted lettuce. To her delight she also found a small herb garden and collected rosemary and sage along with others whose names she did not know.

After picking seven roses from the trellis by the house she sat on the steps soaking in the sun and watching a plume of smoke creep along the sea-washed horizon. A yellow butterfly fluttered to the flowers in her hand and slowly opened and closed his wings. When he flew away Angelique also rose and returned with her

booty to the cellar letting a blaze of sunlight in with her. Happiness at seeing Leland on the bed made her dizzy and for a moment she just stood and looked at him, then, bursting into song she put away her produce and arranged the roses so he would see them when he awoke.

"It is a long time since I heard you sing like that."

"Oh Leland, I thought you still slept. It is such a lovely day!" She wanted so much to caress him but shyness held her back. "I found herbs."

"You always were a good forager." He tried to sit up but sank back, his upper lip damp. "If only I could get to the bathroom!"

"Never mind," Angelique handed him the bedpan she had taken from Lady Tibbit's cupboard on one of her first forays into the house, and brought a bowl of water with which she sponged his face. She always got a special pleasure from this tender touching of his features, so vulnerable with the eyes closed, like a child.

"I must treat your wound." She removed the tape, then the pad. He winced as it pulled away but she worked steadily with cotton wool dipped in diluted peroxide. "I wish I had some penicillin ointment," she said as she covered it again, "It is healing well."

"I think I should have a doctor."

"No!"

He looked suprised by the angry vehemence in her voice and said nothing more.

At noon Angelique went to the kitchen to prepare soup for dinner and when she returned she was shocked to find Leland sprawled on the floor, halfway between the bed and the door.

"What have you done?" she cried, running to him.

"Wanted to look out - see where we are." His words were halting.

"Do you not yet understand that you must stay in bed? What if you did look out and someone saw you?"

"Perhaps it would be a good thing."

"You do not know what you say, your mind is fuddled! Look, the wound bleeds again!"

She helped him back to bed, part of her gratified to perceive the agony his shoulder gave him as he moved, part of her almost weeping over his pain.

At last he lay, very still, seeming almost afraid to breathe. Slowly the grimace eased from his face. Angelique began to clean the table, venting her frustrations in energetic scrubbing.

"Did they loot the house? Burn it?"

Angelique turned from her work. "I do not know." How long before he forgot the outside and became con-

tent with their world?

"There are valuable papers in the safe I should have."

"I will get them for you - after dark." She took an orange and began to peel it for him.

"It would be too dangerous. I have heard no shooting, perhaps it is all over."

"Perhaps. I will find out tonight. Here, eat this." She fed him the orange, a quarter at a time.

He slept during the afternoon and she dozed in the chair. The air in the small room was warm and heavy with the scents of flowers and citrus. Later she squeezed orange juice and held his dear head with her hand as he drank.

"Why am I so weak?" he asked.

"You lost a lot of blood."

"Were you there when it happened?"

"I found you in the evening."

"I seem to remember you on the horse. Going away..."

"You dreamed. Now stop thinking and rest." She smoothed his pillow and sheets. "I must go and get our dinner.

After they had eaten Leland grew restless and kept looking at the window. "I don't think you should go."

"You will be more content after I find out what has happened will you not?"

He grunted.

"Then I shall go."

"You must stay in the shadows and run no risks."

"I shall be like a spy," Good, at last he was interested, sharing an adventure with her.

"Use only the torch inside the house, the moon should be strong enough to guide you there, I saw it through the window last night. Before you go inside stay hidden for at least ten minutes watching and listening then, when your damned sure no one's about, keep acting as though they still were. Go in by the back door. You know the combination to the safe?"

She nodded. How he loved plotting and planning!

"Good. Bring the metal box - and the gun. Be sure to bring that too. Once you've got them come back quickly." His eyes were bright and he looked pleased with himself. "Perhaps you should wear a disguise," he said after a moment.

"I will find something."

Angelique went straight away into the house and found a maid's navy blue dress hanging in the kitchen. It smelled of sweat and grease and she wrinkeled her nose as she pulled it on. It hung lumpishly to her

ankles. Over her head she tied a spotted kerchief.

When she entered the cellar room Leland laughed aloud. "Oh my beautiful Angela, if Tregarons could see you now! You do look a sight! Wonderful! At least if you're seen no one will possibly recognise you. Now wait until midnight."

Angelique was tired and longed to get the whole thing over with. She was almost asleep in her chair when Leland's voice awakened her.

"Do you remember the time the German soldier came to your father's farm and we watched him from the window?"

How could she forget, it was like yesterday! "Oh Leland, I almost died of terror. You crept out and threw a firecracker into the wood and he ran to see what it was..."

His eyes sparkelled in the candle light. "I hid in a hollow tree and you were furious. Beat me with your fists when I came in!"

"I thought you would be killed!"

"Wish it were I going out this time," his face was glum. "Bloody shoulder."

"It is time. Sleep, I will soon be back." Angelique snuffed the candle, carefully changed the lock from inside to outside and set off into the darkness.

CHAPTER XXII

The moon was bright, as Leland had said, and palm trees stood gaunt against the sky. An owl rushed by and bats squealed and circled overhead. Angelique suddenly felt very weary and couldn't remember when she had last slept, but she forced herself on feeling slightly light headed. When she reached the road she walked quickly and nervously, finding the path into the banana grove just in time to escape the headlights of a lone car. A German army officer perhaps, returning from the tavern. Like a familiar hall the track stretched ahead, all silver and black, and the only sound was that of leaves scraping one against the other. A gusting wind suddenly brought the throb of distant drums. Were they dancing? Hot, brown, uninhibited, laughing and leaping in warm light, bare feet hammering the dirt floor ... no ... what was she thinking? Army boots, drunken breath and false girls. She had been in such a place once on an errand for Papa. Smoke had stung her eyes. Now she was on an errand for Leland. He was waiting...

Lawn suprised Angelique's feet and she paused to look at the house, serene and inviolate. She shifted the basket she carried from one hand to the other, loathe to continue, and instead of going forward skirted the grass and found herself at the stable. Harpoon nuzzeled her cheek and, going inside his loose-box, she saw that everything was as it should be. "Good boy," she said, patting his neck. "One of your shoes hangs over the cellar door to bring us luck ... but no, that is not yours ... sometimes I just do not know ... Are they exercising you?"She saw the lunging line hung outside the door. "Good, good."

Now she went up to the house feeling more reluctant to enter the closer she got. Familiar scents of polish and old wood met her at the door, pulling her inside, confusing her. She told herself that as long as she turned on no lights the place could not capture her but she wanted desperately to leave. There was a woman who lived here who would try to keep her from returning to the security of Leland and the cellar ... I have a job to do - there is nobody.

Angelique took the envelopes that lay scattered over the hall table and by the small circle of her torch opened them, answering bills from the checkbook in the desk and writing a month's pay in advance for each of

servants. That done she went to the oil painting of tumbled fruit that covered the safe and, after her fourth try, the lock opened. She took out the tin box and set it in her basket, then shone her torch around the cavity, stopping on the jewel cases and then Leland's blue-black Webley with the two boxes of shells beside it. Her hand reached for the gun, hovered, and came back empty. Angelique shut the door and rehung the painting.

Now she could go. A sound came from outside. A footstep on the walk? Angelique snapped off her light and listened. Nothing. She crept to the back door and waited, hearing only the usual night rustlings, but still she knew eyes watched her and she broke into a cold sweat. Leaving the porch she crept from shadow to shadow through the garden and into the banana grove, forcing herself to stop in its protection and look back. The house was like an old blind man staring into the moon. She turned away, walking fast but not too fast, sternly telling herself she imagined the footsteps that followed her.

At first when Angelique reached the road she was glad of its brilliance compared to the blackness she left, then she realized it could be her undoing and rushed along, the basket banging against her hip and her lungs hurting.

She wiped sweat from her nose with a forefinger and saw the gates of World's End as sanctuary.

How foolish she had been, all worked up over nothing. Now she hurried in anticipation, for soon she would be in the little room with Leland. Her spirit soared as she undid the lock and let herself in among the smells and trappings of her home.

"Angela! Are you safe?" Came the hoarse whisper.

Putting down her basket she ran to the bed, pushing her face into the hollow of his neck. She hadn't expected to cry but now she wept unrestrainedly and his one good arm went around her and held her close. "There, there," he said.

"Oh Leland, I was so frightened."

"But you did it. You were not caught, my brave little girl."

But Angelique knew she had not been afraid of being captured by any tangible being, it was something far worse that threatened her. Empty at last of tears she stood up. "Poor Leland, I smell terrible, I must get out of this horrible dress."

He waited until she had washed to ask her anything and as she brushed her hair he said," Did you get the papers?"

"Yes, they are here."

"And the gun?"

"I had no time. I heard someone."

He sighed and said nothing.

"Leland? Are you angry?"

"No, Angela, I am not angry, perhaps it is just as well."

Suddenly weariness overcame Angelique so she could scarcely stop from falling. She started for the chair but Leland patted the bed beside him. "You must lie down tonight. Come, there is room."

She looked doubtfully at the narrow cot.

"We've managed on less before. You'll get sick if you don't sleep-and I need you."

Happiness radiated through Angelique and her heart turned upside down as Leland grinned the familiar grin she had not seen for a very long time.

"Unfortunately with my shoulder I won't be able to take advantage of the situation ... but I would like you near." His voice was like a boy's.

Angelique removed the raincoat she wore as a dressing gown over her nakedness and lay beside him, pulling covers over them both. She felt him smile in the darkness and listened as his breathing grew deep and even, but she could not sleep for a long time, reluctant to miss one precious moment of feeling him close.

She crept from his side without disturbing him, quickly dressed and went outside feeling so terribly happy as she faced the early sunlight that she longed to soar with the birds she watched tumbling and darting through endless blue sky. She went to the garden to dig potatoes, breathing deeply as earth smells rose, and often stopping as she kneeled, to drift into a mellow day dream. A bee buzzed around her head and she wandered after it, finding a fallen coconut and a tree heavy with mangoes. She sat on a rock eating one of the juicy pithy fruits and all the while she watched for things to tell Leland when she got back: the tiny lizard sunning itself, bird-song that burst from a thousand exhuberant throats, a flower of gold and purple velvet, ferns and their intricate feathery patterns.

Leland still slept when she arrived with her arms full and she managed to get the room cleaned and the gay new curtains hung before he stirred. For the first time his eyes did not first look around the room as though seeking escape but went straight to her with a welcoming smile that made her heart tremble.

"How are you?" she asked.

"Better. Help me sit up."

When she had him leaning agaist the pillow he

noticed the curtains. "Those are very handsome, Angela. I had forgotten how clever you are."

Thrilled by his compliment Angelique could feel herself blush and turned away to get his breakfast of fresh fruit, coconut, and coconut water to drink. Hungry for the first time in days, she ate with him, and told him about the beauty of her early morning, delighted to see genuine interest in his eyes and to hear him laugh.

When they had finished he demanded to be helped to the washroom. "No more of that bedpan routine," he said.

Angelique hated to see how much it hurt but he struggled to his feet and, leaning on her made it across the room. She left him and while she made the bed she smiled remembering his embarrassment when, once long ago, he had regained conciousness to find a young girl caring for him. How relieved he had been when Papa had appeared for the more personal attentions!

After she helped him back Leland fell fast asleep. "Rest, my darling." Angelique stroked his clammy forehead. "There is nothing to worry about and we have all the time in the world." A thoughtful line grew between her eyes, she must prepare for that future, dig a garden, saving potatoes for seed. Perhaps she could

collect lettuce seed ... she would find some chickens, steal them if needs be ... plant flowers just outside the window where Leland could see them ... string a clothesline to the back door of the house where it wouldn't be seen...

"Angelique?"

"Yes? You should be sleeping."

"Do I look better without a mustache?"

"Much better."

"I need a shave."

"I will do it this afternoon."

And she did, laughing at his nervousness. "Now if I had a straight razor then you would have cause to worry!"

He asked for a second helping of potato soup that night and they ate while a nightingale sang in the garden outside. Angelique closed the window to stop the candle shadows from jumping on the wall, then sat in the rocker and took up a new piece of embroidery she had begun. Leland lay with his eyes closed, she didn't know whether he slept or not and she spoke, softly. "The stars are very beautiful tonight, Leland, and so many of them! Do you think that is where butterflies go after dark so they can fly in sunlight high above the earth? Perhaps it is the stars that turn into butterflies during the day..." She thought this over

while she changed thread. "I remember a field outside the village where I lived as a child that became golden with buttercups every spring, and I would wander through them up to my chin, watching the butterflies land and flutter. One day, I remember, a man came into the field with a net to catch them and I asked him why, when they were so pretty and happy. He told me he sold them to collectors who stuck pins through them and I was so horrified I began to scream until a passerby ran in thinking I was being hurt.

The collector was very embarrassed, I can remember how red his face was, how he tried to hush me. I also remember enjoying his reactions so much that I forgot why I cried. He never came back.

Do you remember the village, Leland? Before the war my Aunt had a cottage ..." Angelique reminisced, her voice sometimes almost a whisper, until the candle finally guttered out and she carefully lay beside Leland and slept.

The next morning Angelique went to a stream in the forest and bathed in a deep pool, sluicing cold water over her body and letting her hair spread in the current. The chuckle of the water made her want to laugh along with it and when she dried, sitting on

the bank in a ray of sunshine, she thanked God for such happiness as filled her. She walked out of the forest barefoot, carrying her shoes, and her walk was almost a dance.

Leland was waiting and Angelique could see that he had been impatient with her absence.

"There, am I not an excellent provider?" she laughed, dropping the food she had collected onto the table. "We have breadfruit for dinner tonight. Oh Leland, it is so beautiful out there, the water so fresh and cold. See, my hair is almost dry! The forest bursts with greeness! I have decided to plant a garden where you can see it, and perhaps I will catch some fish although I have not yet seen any. You look better, your face is quite pink!"

"I feel better. Tell me more about what you saw."

She did and her exuberance made him laugh.

That night as she sat beside the bed polishing brass candlesticks the clicking sound began in Leland's throat.

"Why do you do that?" Angelique asked.

"Do what?"

"In your throat, that strange sound. Why?"

"I hadn't noticed. Do I do it often? Is it unpleasant?"

"It can grow aggrivating."

"Why didn't you tell me before?"

"I do not know. Why do you do it?"

Leland thought a moment. "I suppose I was worrying about your hands. You've always taken such care of them."

"Hands are for working with." She held up the gleaming candlesticks, "There are they not lovely?" They both looked at them.

Putting them away Angelique took out her embroidery. After a while Leland asked her to talk to him. "Stories like you did the other night, about you as a little girl."

How like a child he is, Angelique thought. How nice to tell bedtime stories again. "I will tell you about the convent where I went to school. At first it frightened me to be left there, I was only seven and had never slept away from home before, and life was strange with the sisters. One of the oddest things was having to wear a sort of cape to bathe under. It was to hide our nakedness from the eyes of God."

"You're joking!" said Leland.

"No, it is true, though I cannot think why God should have minded seeing our tiny bare bodies. I could understand some of the fatter nuns feeling that way! There was one nun, young with warm laughing eyes, and when I rebelled after one particualrly difficult

and uncomfortable bath her eyes sparkeled, though she tried not to let me see her mirth, and I remember she put a finger to her lips and, looking about to make sure no one could hear, whispered, "Angelique, if God can stand to see our naughty souls as plainly as he does I am sure he does not mind our bodies, but for the sake of the other nuns we will wear the cloaks, all right?" I never complained again."

She heard Leland's chuckle from the bed. "You must have been a handful."

"I expect I was. I learned to love the old place in time. Chapel bells mingled with the bleating of sheep and goats on the surrounding hills, the Christ over the altar and stained glass windows that took my mind off of aching knees and too long prayers. I remember them all. I never did find out if the nuns were really bald, and if they shaved their heads each day like father his beard."

They laughed.

"I remember the churchbells in my village in England," said Leland. "My family wasn't strict about church so most Sundays I'd hear them from from the top of Bredon Hill while I sat on my old hunter's back, looking out over the counties, dreaming how someday I'd travel with my regiment way farther than I could see.

No place has ever been as beautiful. Why do we all want to get as far from home as we can and once we get there spend the rest of our lives looking back with longing?"

"We change."

"Sometimes not for the better."

"No. Tell me more about your boyhood, Leland."

He did and her sewing lay untouched as she went with him into his past.

Later she lay awake at his side, loving the boy who had dreamed of becoming a soldier.

Next day she brought an armful of books from Tibbet's library and when the morning chores were done and the evening meal gathered she sat by the bed and read aloud from classics she had loved long ago; Flaubert, lilting phrases from Shakespeare, scenes of English beauty by Lawrence. Glancing, she saw Leland's eyes dreaming out the window, the army jacket draped around his shoulders and one arm supported by a scarf the color of hot coals mingled with gold, and she became so choked with love for him that for a time she could not read.

That evening a gentle peace enclosed them and they drifted again into tales of the past and laughed together in the candlelight.

Brass buttons gleamed and Leland looked at them thoughtfully. "Strange you should have kept my old uniform. When you washed my shirt did you find anything?"

"Your medal, I have it safe. Do you remember that day? Oh I was so very proud of you!"

His attention switched to the photo on the table and he asked for it. For a long time he held it, looking into his own young face and when he sighed Angelique recognized his sense of loss, the sudden lurching despair of it. "You loved him, Angelique, didn't you?"

Quickly she reached out for his hand, "It is you still, my love. You look at yourself."

A sound worked its way insiduously through to them. "Drums," Leland whispered.

Angelique tilted her head and listened. "Are they not thrilling? This place is beautiful when..."

"When what?" prompted Leland.

"When one escapes the people who spoil it."

They listened.

"Come to me," Leland whispered.

"Your shoulder..."

"I want you."

Angelique undressed and slid in beside him. Carefully, scarcely moving they made love, taking a long

beautiful time, body and soul melting, combining, turning to mist, and rainbows and sunrise.

Angelique looked into the beauty of his face and traced his cheek with her finger.

"Angel, my Angel," he whispered and her rapture was complete.

When they awoke it was raining. A steady, solid rain, unlike the quick drenching showers of summer. Angelique listened to it hitting the window and gushing through the downspouts toward the catchment tank. For the first time there was a chill in the room and she stayed longer in the warmth of bed. Leland stirred and they smiled at each other.

"Where's that maid with tea," he said.

"I am your maid," said Angelique stepping out onto the cold floor and quickly into her clothes. She made tea from the thermos she filled everynight and sat beside him while they drank.

"I like to see you touselled," he said.

When she helped him to the washroom he seemed weaker 'though Angelique told herself she imagined it. When she dressed the wound there was a little drainage on the bandage and she used the last of the peroxide to clean it.

"I can't move my arm," he said. "Not at all."

"It will heal," but she was afraid.

Rain closed them in and, but for short trips to the kitchen, Angelique stayed with Leland. She told about the couple who had built their home from an abandoned mill.

"Shall we do that?" said Leland.

"Oh, yes. It would be all our own and no one would ever find us. We would build the stones into stout walls..."

"And use slate from the old roof for a new one. Buy a mule to haul things."

"I would plant a garden, and raise chickens, and have goats for milk..."

"I had a knack for carpentry at school."

"You would make lovely furniture."

They laughed. "It would be a challenge," he said. "An adventure."

They planned the layout of rooms then suddenly sunlight streamed through the window.

"I must find us something good for dinner. Rest a while." Angelique looked back from the door to see his eyes still full of dreams and she smiled as she went outside.

Running through sunsplash and shadow she was happy

as a child and when she returned, as well as fruit and vegetables, she brought all the beauty she could carry to share with him, filling the little room with ferns, leaves, flowers and moss until it smelled and seemed a part of the forest.

Leland watched her spread things about, listened to her chatter, and burst into a loud laugh. "Angel, come here, you're completely mad."

He took her hand and pulled her face down to his all the while looking into her eyes. "I love you, Angel, mad or not, I love you." He kissed her gently on the lips.

Before dinner she cleaned his wound, covering it quickly so he would not see how it wept.

"I have found a poem," she said later,"see if you remember." And she began to read from an old book.

"The sea is calm tonight
the tide is full, the moon lies fair
upon the straits ..."

"I do remember," Leland said, "You used to read it to me that other time very long ago. Go on."

Angelique's voice was soft and tremulous as she became lost in the dear remembered words of Mathew Arnold, drowning in memories of first love.

Then she came to the line that had rung as a paean in that long ago cellar:

"Ah love let us be true to one another!"

What a joyous promise it had been! And she read on.

"for the world which seems
to lie before us like a land of dreams
so various, so beautiful, so new
Hath neither joy, nor love, nor light
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept by confused alarms of struggle and flight
Where ignorant armies clash by night."

The room was silent.

"I didn't remember that last part," said Leland.

Angelique closed the book. "We thought it had nothing to do with us."

"We should have listened ..." He stroked her fingers.

They had dinner, though Leland ate little and fell into a deep sleep immediately after. Angelique rocked, looking at him, still haunted by the poem. All at once there came memories of the years, months, then only weeks past, and they hurt. "Oh Leland," she whispered,

"Why did you leave me? Where did you go? I only wanted to look after you but you would not let me. You made me useless so I had to stop caring. Had to forget our love and when I remembered, you were gone. I wanted to die, Leland, I was so lonely."

She took his hand and held it against her cheek, rocking, rocking...

His hand was still in hers when she awakened hours later and her eyes went sleepily to the candle that fluttered and fought for its last breath. How intense the heat from such a small flame! It died but the heat remained scalding her palm. Leland! Hastily she felt for his forehead. Its damp burning terrified her and she scrambled to find a new candle and light it. His face shone flushed against rumpled sheets and he swung his head from side to side.

"So hot!" he whispered.

Angelique fetched him a glass of water, then bathed his forehead, kneeling on the floor. An owl hooted outside and some small creature screamed in the hollow of the night. Leland tossed and moaned and slept while Angelique watched and waited for release from the hours that seemed to mark time.

At last he quieted and, overcome with weariness, she lay beside him outside the covers and as she floated

between two worlds she heard his breathing change and then his voice little more than a whisper.

"You left me too, Angel. Left me to my thwarted ambitions, my demons. We were both too proud. But I always loved you."

A terrible sorrow rushed through Angelique's sleep, as though she leaned over a dead child. It filled every nerve and melted her like a river running from a snowfield.

In the morning Leland seemed better. Just a last burning of the poisons, Angelique told herself, now he would recuperate quickly. She tried to ignore the brightness in his eyes and the angry pink around the wound, and prepared a breakfast which he tried valiantly to eat.

"I've grown to like ackee," he said chasing a forkful around his plate. "We must be sure to have some on our property. I've been thinking we should make you a studio, you have talent, you should not waste it. Your paintings must decorate our house."

She smiled. Everything was going to be all right, there was nothing to fear. "What would you like for dinner tonight?"

"Soup. I have a terrible thirst. Are you going

out?"

"Just to find vegetables. I will soon be an expert soupmaker with all this practice."

"Don't be long ..."

"No, I will hurry."

Outside she leaned against the door, smelling warm wood, her arm prickled by peeling paint, and with all her force she pushed the lock home, squeezing until her hand hurt and her knuckles went white.

Rushing from one place to another she gathered yams, calalou and chou chou, proud of the variety she could now discover. She left them piled in shade and picked [redacted] oranges from below the house, pausing to let her eyes roam over the blue green mountains and fill her lungs with heavy fragrance; flowers, grass, citrus, woodsmoke, all so familiar. A breeze fanned her face, moved her skirt, begging her feet to follow across luxuriant tropical ground into the nearby jungle. Angelique knew where she was and loved it. "Oh God let us stay," she prayed and longed to send roots down deep and never let go. She lifted closed eyes to the burning sun, filling her mind with red.

I must go, Leland waits. A john crow circled and landed on a rock, ugly vulture head turning to watch her.

Leland's eyes were on her the instant she entered the room, making her think they had been fixed on the door for the whole time she was gone. She chattered as she prepared the vegetables and tried not to notice how quiet he was but later, when she went to the kitchen, she was in a panic to return and when she did the color of his cheeks, and the sweat, terrified her.

She gave him more of the orange juice he craved.

"Bamboo," he said licking his lips, "I will make bamboo furniture. Very strong, very handsome furniture. His eyes closed and his voice drifted without force. "A couch, chairs and a bed ..."

"And I will sew colorful cushions to put on them," said Angelique softly.

"We'll build a big fireplace." His voice was a fragile thread.

"It will be lovely to sit in front of on cool evenings."

"You will be in charge of the flowerbeds - whatever you want though I do like yellow daisies."

"We shall have lots - they will make our home beautiful."

"You will make our home beautiful!" Suddenly his eyes flew open. "Rest," he blurted, "That's all I need."

Wildly he searched her face.

"Yes, Darling, just rest."

But with nightfall the fever grew, making him delirious, and though Angelique tried to keep him still, afraid the wound would reopen, she found she could do nothing but watch his tormented writhing.

Exhausted, at last he lay quiet and she sang. French lullabies, hymns and school songs that brought peace from those times and made her feel less alone. The compassionate face of the wooden Negro Christ came into her mind and she prayed, "Please, help us."

Leland's good hand reached for her, burning her wrist where it touched. "Angel," he muttered, "Angel."

Even as Angelique watched, the flesh seemed to melt off his bones, and through cracked lips he constantly called for water. Tossing, he moaned, then lay still, sweat-soaked, his breath rattling in his throat.

Angelique leaned over him. "You do understand that I cannot take you to hospital, my love, do you not? I cannot lose you again, I cannot!"

The night dragged on...

In the stillest hour he looked at her through heavy lids. "I think I shall die, my Angel."

"No!" Suddenly nothing mattered but that he should live. "You will not die!" Leaving the door wide behind her

she ran out and across the lawn to the tangled pile of bamboo which she started to frantically push aside, not noticing the cuts that appeared on her arms and hands, sending trails of blood to run and drip over the ground and her clothes. At last the landrover was cleared and she jumped in and pressed the starter. Two weak chugs, then nothing. Desperately Angelique pumped the accelerator until, glancing at the dash board, she saw one knob pulled out beyond the others, then she slumped hopelessly. The side lights had been left on. The battery was drained. Leland would die. She had killed him. "Oh, God."

"Mrs. Brougham, Mrs. Brougham," A hand touched her shoulder. "Let me help."

She could only stare at Mr. Landy beside her there in the dark.

"Come now," Gently he helped her from the vehicle.

"Leland," she gasped. "He must get to hospital."

"I know, we will take him."

They hurried to the cellar and when they entered Mr. Landy went straight to the bed and lifted Leland, wrapped in blankets, like a child.

"He's sure terrible light," he said in his soft way, and carried him from the room.

Angelique watched the army jacket fall to the floor

and lie like something dead.

"Come, Mrs. Brougham," called the voice from outside.

She followed to Mr. Landy's jeep feeling helpless and devoid of thought.

"Now come sit next to the Colonel, let him lean on you and we'll be at the hospital in no time."

Angelique did as she was told and as they hurtled along empty roads no word was spoken.

She watched the quiet efficient men in white take Leland away from her, in through the doors of the hospital out of sight. She stared numbly at the still swinging door.

"Come."

Mr. Landy's voice came from far away and, feeling a light pressure on her arm, she found herself passing along white corridors until they came to a couch onto which she gratefully sank. A cup of coffee was thrust into her hands. "Drink," said the voice, and she did. Distant bells rang, slippered feet shuffled past, the rustle of starched uniforms.

"She should have those cuts cleaned," said a woman's voice.

"I'll do it," came Mr. Landy's reply and Angelique held her arms out for his tender ministrations like a

trusting child.

A doctor appeared and commanded her attention. "You husband will be all right, Mrs. Brougham. A few hours more and it would have been too late, but he's a strong man. Now I'm afraid I must ask some questions. The wound is from a gun and I must report it to the authorities, that's the law. How did it happen?"

Angelique searched back through the cluttered compartments of her mind and picked a memory from the jumble. "I think it was a boy Leland had dismissed. He was riding the chestnut, Leland that is, I found him in the grass. I took care of him in the war you see."

Mr. Landy said something and the doctor left. Angelique lay her head back, eyes still open. So tired. Nothing mattered anymore, white walls, white ceilings, white people, nothing. She saw Mr. Landy's vibrant tanned face and the understanding warm eyes were like an anchor. She looked down at the wrinkled, stained skirt and blouse, her bare feet, and smiled weakly. "What a sight I am!"

"You are the finest lady on the island even now. Let me take you home."

Angelique shook her head. "No, I must stay with him."

"Then I shall be back shortly, there are things I have to do."

She thought he had gone but first he draped a blanket over her. "You sleep, Mrs. Brougham, I'll not be long."

He never asked one question, she thought watching him walk away. Dear Mr. Landy.

It seemed no time before he was back carrying one of her overnight bags. "Good, you slept. I took the liberty of having Cara pack a few things for you. Nurse says there's a bathroom down the hall if you wish to change."

He looked so anxious Angelique managed a smile and the relief in his eyes encouraged her to please him more by taking the bag and going in the direction he pointed.

She submerged herself in a deep bath but though her body turned pink in its heat the chills continued deeper than the marrow of her bones. The stinging cuts were like small spurs jabbing her back to life and once she had dressed, put on shoes, pinned her hair and brightened her mouth with lipstick she felt quite well.

Mr. Landy waited with coffee and toast which she forced him to share with her, and then she asked a nurse to send for Leland's doctor so she might find

how he was.

"The doctors are in with him now, Mrs. Brougham. I'll have someone come as soon as I can."

Angelique sat down and Mr. Landy encouraged her to drink another cup of coffee. "You take care of yourself now, the Colonel will need you when he comes home."

He won't! There will be the maids again and the nurses ... the knowlege was a bomb destroying her soul and she looked at Mr. Landy with stricken eyes.

He reached out. "It'll be all right, Mrs. Brougham, You'll see, it will all turn out all right." His words stroked her and his touch on her arms gave courage.

"How did you know I needed you last night?" she whispered.

"You always say I have the eyes of a hawk. I see the flicker of your candle from my house days ago and I watch to see no harm come to you. Last night the candle burn all night and I smell trouble, again tonight and I know you need help."

"You followed me the night I went to Brougham Hall?"

"I see your torch and I watch over you on the way home. There be dangerous people about these days."

The doctor appeared. "You may visit your husband now, Mrs. Brougham."

She got up to follow, then faltered, afraid.

"It be all right, Mrs. Brougham," Mr. Landy encouraged softly.

Angelique went with the brisk young man who led her to a door with a No Visitor sign on it. They entered a room of shadows.

"He's heavily sedated," the doctor said. "We had to reopen the wound and clean it, the bullet did more damage than it seemed, might have destroyed some nerves but we can't be sure yet. When he comes to you may find he's forgotten some of these last days. Don't let him worry, a few days lost will make no matter."

He left and Angelique went to the bed. A bottle dripped liquid into Leland's arm. His face was pale and thin. "Oh, Leland," she whispered, "I do not know what came over me, I am so sorry if I did you harm. It was a beautiful dream though, was it not?"

What would he say when he came to? Would he send her to an institution? Something had happened inside her head, perhaps she had been mad, but not now. "I must stay with you, Leland, for I know my Leland is still there, even if he does become hidden again."

She sat in the wooden chair beside the bed, (no comforting squeak nor rocking from this,) and watched a nurse open blinds. Shortly another bustled in and

asked Angelique to leave while they washed the patient. She wanted to push them away from him but instead she left and felt a pang of conscience to see Mr. Landy still waiting.

"Dear Mr. Landy, you must go home, I can never thank you for all you have done. I am feeling well again now and Leland is sleeping."

"You are sure? I will come for you tonight."

"Send Roosevelt, you have done too much for me all ready. Thank you, Mr. Landy, so very much." She took one of his hands in hers.

A blush darkened his face. "It is my joy to help you, Mrs. Brougham," he said and was gone.

"You can go back in now," said a nurse.

Angelique sat all day in the semi-darkened room, feeling the weariness creep back over her and fighting the bitterness at watching nurses do her job. Now and then she dozed, always to awaken with the fear of his accusing gaze being upon her.

It was almost a relief when she was advised she must leave though it hurt to be parted from him.

"He should be awake when you come in the morning, Mum," said a nurse.

Outside the Rolls waited with Roosevelt holding the door open for her. "Good evening, Mum. How is

the Colonel?"

It was as though they had never been away. "He will be all right, thank you, Roosevelt."

The door closed and she was shut in with the leather smells, gliding along with the chauffeur's head unmoving in front of her. It was like being in her coffin, and when she reached them the gate posts of Brougham Hall were the entrance to her grave. She wanted to run away, back to the cellar.

It is all over, Angelique, she told herself, all over.

The house took her in as though she had never left, wiping those ten days from existance. Angelique went straight to her room and looked out the window. The opposite hill was only a black shape against black sky.

"What will I do?" she whispered. "What will I become?"

CHAPTER XXIII

Next morning the landrover was in the garage as clean as if it had never been away.

Angelique bemusedly ran a hand over the fender.

"Mr. Landy bring it straight here from the hospital yesterday like he say you tell him, Mum," said Roosevelt from under the hood of the Rolls Royce. "Then he walk home though I offer to drive him. You sure you not need me to drive you now, Mum?"

"I am sure."

"Can I have the day off then, Mum, to celebrate?"

"Is it your birthday, Roosevelt?"

"Lord no, Mum. Today the island get her independance. There be speeches and all sorts of goings on. We our own ruler now! How come you not know?"

"I forget, what with the Colonel being ill. Tell the others to go also, of course you may all have off." So it had happened - as quietly as that. Angelique drove toward the hospital feeling the excitement in the villages she passed, everyone dressed in Sunday white, flashing wide smiles. Speeches and triumphant music came over the

car radio. No bloodbath after all, just speeches and papers signed. She sat in the parking lot for a while before facing Leland.

Inside his door she stopped, pinned by his gaze.

Her bottom lip caught between her teeth, then she squared her shoulders and raised her chin.

"Angela! Isn't this a fine pickle? What the hell happened? Riding the horse one minute, Next I'm here and no one can tell me anything."

Angelique could not speak as she searched Leland's face, unbelieving of her reprieve.

"What happened?" He repeated.

It was true, he remembered nothing! Thank God! She went to his side. "It was a bullet," she said, "Perhaps an accident. There is no way of knowing but you will be all right."

"Didn't find the man, eh. Might have expected it. Work's at a standstill on the property I suppose."

"Everything is fine, but today is a holiday, Independance day." She told him all she knew about it.

"So the buggers got their way," was all he said. His eyes closed. "Got me so damned drugged," he muttered.

"That is all right. Sleep." Angelique straightened the blanket and smoothed his hair. What a relief he had forgotten, and yet...was that time to be wiped out

as though it had never been? Sorrow weighed on her and she ran a finger along his cheek. "Leland, darling, could you not remember just a little? In your dreams perhaps? It was a happy time was it not?" She studied the colorless, vulnerable face. "I will always love you, Leland."

Nurses came to tend him and she could only watch. Yes, it was all over.

When she left the hospital that afternoon she drove straight to World's End and, forbidding herself any regrets, brutally stripped the cellar, putting sheets into a laundry bag to be washed and returned to the linen cupboard, packing curtains, uniform and souvenirs into the suitcase. Even the photo of the young Captain was packed away, she would no longer need it. She struggled table, chairs and rug back into the house, threw out the flowers and took the horseshoe from over the door. Nothing was left, the room was just a place for maids to store their brooms, as bleak and empty as when she had first seen it, exorcised now of the past which it had returned to her. A spider already spun its web across the window.

Angelique threw the lock from the door into some bushes and took the suitcase and picnic hamper to the

car.

Back at Brougham Hall she returned the tin box to the safe then went to her room and sat in front of the mirror.

"It is all behind me, the whole terrible, glorious summer." Even as she said it she felt a new strength and knew she would be able to carry on with whatever life would bring, for she had found herself and her lover. "I had my moment of beauty, but what of Leland? I never thought of his suffering through those years. I should have helped. He should have talked to me. I should have listened. What did the woman tell Peter? Remember the Search-Me-Heart flower, that was it. I hope he takes her advice better than I did, I forgot my heart. Now I will be strong. No more weeping."

She looked the woman opposite in the eye then took cream from the drawer and smoothed it over her hands. She must have her hair done.

For a week Leland was in hospital and every day Angelique took news of the property and read to him from the paper.

Once she asked the doctor if he would ever remember the lost days. "He may, but it's unlikely," was the reply.

The afternoon she had her hair done, smooth and sleek as before, Leland had a strange expression as she came through his door but he said nothing.

He got new glasses, with square black rims which gave him a distinquished appearance, but he said it was still tiring to sit up so would she please still read to him. Every afternoon she did so and they were the happiest hours of her day.

Then he came home where Cook make him broth and Cara brought him everything he asked for.

That first morning he was up for breakfast.

"Goodness, should you not stay in bed?" said Angelique.

"Enough of that. I'm an old soldier, remember? I've work to catch up on in the office. Must be a terrible mess in there, keep me busy till I can get around. Wonder if the workers are too cocky to work?"

"I suppose they still have to earn a living," Angelique passed the toast. "I do hope there will be no trouble."

"I'll phone Tregaron, see what's happening."

Angelique picked up her old routine; swimming, carefully monitoring her tanning time, reading, seeing the maids did their work. She visited Harpoon but did

not ride. "Perhaps next week," she told him.

She let her thoughts stray neither forward nor back and only when she sat at meals with Leland, listening to him discuss his daily problems, was she truly enjoying herself.

One afternoon she drove down to the hotel beauty shop and met Jane Downey afterward in the poolside bar.

The plump woman, all frills and flounces, ordered them each a Tom Collins and heaved a great sigh. "What a relief it is to be out again! It seems like forever - thank goodness everything was settled so amicably! How is Peter?"

"Very well, according to his letters."

"Dear boy! Jack can never stop talking about how wonderful you both were at the fire. There's hardly a scar now, but we could have been completely ruined. I must arrange a party, get everything going again."

They sipped their drinks.

"You are quiet, Angelique, but then you must be worn out what with Leland being so ill."

"It was tiring. How did you know about it?"

"I don't remember. Bush telegraph, I guess, you know how it is."

Angelique watched the beach boy dive into the pool for the fifth time. "Not many tourists here," she remarked.

"Still wary, I expect," Jane rattled the bangles that ringed her right arm. "I did hear a rumour that the manager here and some of the white staff were being fired so blacks can take their jobs. I don't know how that will work out I'm sure. Have you heard about Liz Scholfield? She's left Harvey for a..."

Angelique listened disinterestedly and watched the boy dive again.

She felt like going for a drive when she left the hotel and went through Durran Bay and up among the lush beauty of the giant ferns into the hills. She drove slowly, enjoying the scenery, and when she saw the gates of the convent ahead she pulled in and rang the bell, curious to see if the French sisters had left.

"I am here to visit Sister Marion," she said to the black nun who greeted her.

"I am sorry, they are all gone, but you are welcome to come in."

"No, no thank you," Angelique turned away but stopped as she heard the clanging of the chapel bell. "Perhaps I will after all," she said.

She was grateful when the nun left her to see to some children who played nearby and Angelique walked on down the familiar halls. When she came to the chapel

a service was in progress led by a tall black priest. On impulse Angelique slipped in and kneeled at the back of rows of schoolgirls and nuns, soon herself absorbed in the familiar latin prayers and phrases. As the small congregation shuffled out she knelt a little longer, consumed by a great longing for the simple woman she had become in the cellar. In here that person had seemed close to her again, but now she must leave and as she stood she saw the priest waiting at the door.

"Thank you for coming," he said, taking her hand.

"Thank you," she said, loving him for the kindness in his eyes while angry for the discontent his service had aroused in her soul.

When she reached home she saw Mr. Landy's mule tied outside the office and idly wondered what business he and Leland had now. Surely not that strip of land again!

When they finally emerged they all sat on the verandah where Cara served drinks and they discussed the weather and how things were growing. Often Angelique felt Mr. Landy watching her as though he had a question he wanted to ask, but when she faced him he turned away or began a new subject.

"Where is Naomi?" she asked Cara, suddenly realizing she hadn't seen the little maid for some time.

"She have pains this morning, Mum, and go home. Baby come by now I expect."

"Goodness, one will be born in the kitchen yet," said Angelique.

"Oh no, Mum, Naomi like her mother to help."

"Yes, Cara, you can leave us now."

The men laughed and Mr. Landy stood up to go.

He was over quite often in the next few days but Angelique thought little about it. In fact she thought little about anything, finding it better that way lest disturbing thoughts seep in. She tried not to be bored but the hours between mealtimes seemed long and purposeless and at night she would often reach out across the lonely half of the bed and wish she had the courage to ask Leland to come back.

The morning she watched him drive away after breakfast, one arm still in a white sling, she was almost overcome with misery. Now it was all starting again. Was some woman waiting - some hotel room? Before it had meant nothing to her, but now... She must be strong, perhaps someday he would come back to her - in the meantime she would wait.

At eight o clock Leland returned and Angelique stiffened to hear his step on the stairs. She heard him call her name.

"Here, in the study," she answered.

He appeared at the door and she feared the fever had returned he was so flushed. "What are you doing?"

"Writing letters. I just finished one to Peter. Do you wish to add anything?"

"How would you like to see him soon?"

"What do you mean?"

"I've sold Brougham Hall."

"What?"

"It's too precarious living here with changes in government and such. Landy gave me a good price."

"Mr. Landy?" she was stunned. "Whatever does he want it for?"

"Says he'll make it into a tourist attraction. Give tours of a working plantation. Perhaps make this a guest house. I've booked us on a cruise ship two weeks from now so better get those maids packing. I've got a hell of a lot to do. Sell the cars and equipment. No end to it all." He stared at her then started to go, turning back at the door. "By the way, Landy says he'll keep the horses for himself."

Angelique sat looking after him, trying to take in

what had been said. After a while she reached for Peter's letter and added: P.S. Father just announced that we are moving to England. Mr. Landy has bought Brougham Hall!! Wherever did he get the money? I have no idea where we will live but you can plan on us all being together for Christmas!

We leave on a cruise ship (most suprising of your father) so will be in London next month some time. Will cable dates when I know. I think I am very happy. Love, Mother.

She spent a restless night and was up early sorting things, going through drawers and emptying cupboards. She came across a box of Peter's baby clothes.

"Has Naomi had her baby?" she asked Cara who helped her.

"Yes, Mum. Yesterday afternoon, a boy."

"Good, tell Roosevelt to bring my car around in twenty minutes."

Angelique drove into Pickney village and stopped outside the run-down shack that was Naomi's home. Two cleanly dressed, runny nosed children watched shyly as she carried the box to the door and knocked. A curtain twitched at a window, voices argued inside, then the door opened and a shrivelled hag looked up at her.

"May I see Naomi?" Angelique asked.

Grudgingly the old woman stood aside and Angelique went in. It took a moment to become accustomed to the dim light, then she saw the three beds pushed against the walls and a table and chairs in the center of the room. From one bed Naomi's small face, still surrounded by wiry plaits, beamed from a white expanse of pillow. Beside her was what looked like a wizened walnut.

"I sorry I not at work, Mum, but he decide to come." Pride and anxiety mixed in her whispery voice and the walnut yawned.

"That is all right, Naomi." How small the pair of them looked. "You take a fortnight off with pay, then I am sure Mr. Landy will hire you back. Colonel Brougham and I are going to England."

"Thank you, Mum." Naomi lifted the covers away from the naked baby and a doll-like foot kicked up. "He a boy, Mum. I name him Peter?" She spoke hopefully, eyes gentle on the child then big on Angelique.

"I will tell my Peter a beautiful baby is named after him and it will make him happy. I have brought something." Angelique went back for the box she had left by the door and put it beside the bed. "You take care, Naomi. Goodbye."

Naomi had turned to the baby, chanting Peter, Peter,

in a kind of lullaby as it tugged at her breast. For a moment Angelique watched, thinking she would remember and someday paint this scene.

A cough brought her attention to the old woman who waited by the door and [redacted] she left, wishing Naomi had shown one sign of regret when she had mentioned leaving the island. But then, why should she? Angelique looked back to see the crone scowling from the doorway and as she started the Mercedes' engine she heard a squalling outside like hungry seagulls. Beautiful children's faces were pressed ugly against the window with open shouting mouths.

"Money, money!" they cried as she drove away.

Brougham Hall became a turmoil of packing cases and trunks. Mr. Landy would keep any furniture Angelique didn't wish to take and she must have changed her mind a dozen times, finally deciding to ship very few items. The mahogany desk, the island scene that hung over the fireplace, dining table and chairs, and the beautifully carved side board. She wanted nothing from the bedrooms and carefully packed Peter's things herself, squeezing the teddy bear in on top.

She saw little of Leland who rushed in and out, and shouted over the phone a great deal. The cars

went one by one. An island official bought the Rolls and drove it away himself. Angelique watched from the verandah and for the first time felt pity for the pompous, bland faced Roosevelt who stood a lonely figure by the garage. She saw something shine on his face and his shoulders sagged as he turned away.

That night, at dinner, Leland said, "Well, that's most of it. By the way, we'll keep your Mercedes. It's a good car and you like it, don't you?"

"Oh yes. Thank you Leland." She was suprised by his thoughtfulness. "What will happen to the dogs?"

"A woman in Royaltown wants them, she'll take the budgies too. You know those bloody dogs scarcely noticed when I came back from being sick."

It seemed to Angelique that he looked out toward Hero's grave, but perhaps not.

"God, I'll be glad when we're on that ship. I'm going to bed now."

"You should let other people do more. You will make yourself ill again."

Leland pushed back his chair. "It won't be done right if I don't do it myself. Good night."

Angelique sat at the table alone, hearing the door of his room snick shut and she thought back longingly to the nights she had lain so close beside him and which

he did not even remember.

Time flew and the vans arrived to take everything to the dock. Men stumped in and out of the house while the maid Cara had brought to help in Naomi's place, watched their feet mar her newly polished floor. A second van pulled up and the driver brought papers up to Leland who took one look and groaned. "The bloody peacocks are here!"

Angelique laughed. She couldn't help it and the more she tried not to the funnier it seemed until she had to sit on the step. A dreadful squawk from the van set her off even harder and the men around her began to laugh too until great roars and gales of laughter rocked around them.

In the middle of the uproar Mr. Landy arrived in his jeep. "Whatever is happening?" he said.

"The peacocks arrived!" Just saying it sent Angelique off again.

A light broke over Mr. Landy's face as he watched her, such an expression of relief and then of pure joy that Angelique, seeing it felt a great urge to hug him. Instead she asked him for his handkerchief and wiped the tears of laughter from her eyes.

Leland came back from inspecting the birds. "I told the driver to take them to the zoo, they'll be

thrilled to receive such a generous donation, probably put up a plaque in our honor." He grinned, "Just what we need, a pair of bloody peacocks! Come on, Landy, let's get these last papers signed."

"Just a moment," Angelique interrupted, "I just remembered, I have some dresses at a seamstress in Royaltown. Oh, Mr. Landy, I hate to ask you when you have already done so much, but could you possibly pay her for me some time when you go in? She is such a poor woman. She can keep the clothes, I shall not need them in England."

"Certainly, Mrs. Brougham, no trouble at all. If you will write the address for me I will pick it up shortly." He and Leland went to the office.

Angelique went into the house which seemed to have already forgotten her. All the personal furnishings were gone and there was nothing left to do except say good-bye to Jane. There had been calls from a multitude of friends and acquaintances during this past week and each farewell had been another tie cut. She had gracefull declined invitations for dinner saying Leland was not strong enough. Perhaps if she phoned the hotel Jane would be by the pool, it was a nuisence her not having a phone.

"Angelique, what a suprise! What luck I was here!"

"I wanted to say goodbye, Jane, we leave for England the day after tomorrow."

A moment of shocked silence. "So soon? My goodness I knew you were leaving, but not for a while ... aren't we going to see you?"

"I am afraid not. It has all been the most dreadful rush."

"Oh my dear! I can't understand Mr. Landy mortgaging his property to buy yours. I mean it's been in his family for generations and I thought he was devoted to it. Of course I don't understand that sort of thing but couldn't he lose everything if it didn't work out? Oh well, it's none of my business. But I shall miss you, Angelique! I wish I could show you the lovely shawl Paul bought me..."

Angelique fought to still the swoopy sensation that had attacked her stomach as Jane spoke of Mr. Landy. He was intelligent, he knew what he was doing. "Goodbye, Jane. Yes I will give Melissa your love if I see her. Goodbye."

She put down the phone and turned to see Mr. Landy at the door.

"Oh, the address, just one moment." She scribbled on an envelope and put the money she owed inside. Then she put in some more. The poor woman deserved it. "Here Mr. Landy, I am extremely grateful to you for doing this."

"You know I will do anything."

"I think you already have, Mr. Landy, I think you have."

He dropped his eyes and she watched him until he was out of sight.

She awoke on that last full day with the pressure gone and time at last to think. Eyes closed, she listened to the morning sounds. She would miss them, but when she looked around her room she knew she would not miss it, nor this house that had denied her at every turn. The island itself though - outside - Harpoon... It was so long since she had ridden him.

Angelique dressed in jodhpurs and after a quick breakfast went straight to the stable. Toby saddled the big thoroughbred and she rode up the track behind the house, past the patch of Pangola grass on the edge of which tire marks were still visible, and on into the jungle. How beautiful it was, this lush tumbled humid world alive with trilling, squawking, twittering birds lacing through vines and leaves. The shadows, the trembling ferns, the echoes. She breathed deeply savoring the fecund richness and she knew that often in the future she would close her eyes and imagine herself here.

"Now, Harpoon, let us put you through your paces." They had reached the big field and the horse worked perfectly with little snorts of pleasure. When sweat began to blacken his neck Angelique stopped him and let him stretch for a nibble of grass, usually strictly forbidden. "Will you forget everything?" Her fingers played with his mane.

She wasn't at all suprised to see Mr. Landy riding toward her on his side of the fence. He opened the gate and she rode through to join him. They rode side by side across his fields saying nothing. Angelique saw the cream cattle standing under a solitary shade tree and silently wished them goodbye. She remembered Peter, small on a fat pony, galloping across these fields and Mr. Landy telling him the names of birds and plants and how the john crows were very useful and also beautiful if you watched them fly and forgot how they looked on the ground.

"Will you take a last cup of tea with me, Mrs. Brougham?"

They turned toward the honest square house and, as so many times before, gave the horse and mule to the boy and went inside. There were fresh flowers in the drawing room.

Angelique sat in the chair she always took while

Mr. Landy disappeared to return with the beautiful china tea service and cakes on the dresden plate.

"It is as though you knew I would be here," she said.

"Perhaps I did," he smiled his gentle secret smile and poured tea. "Are you happy, Mrs. Brougham?"

"Oh yes. I think life will be better for me in England. For Leland also. I will miss the island though." Her eyes strayed to the window, "I have learned in these past months just how dearly I love it, but I know I cannot belong to it as I would like. Often in England I shall wake at night and listen for the drums ... and hurt not to hear them."

"You will always have some of the island, Mrs. Brougham." Something in his voice made her look at him and his face was unbelievably sad as he spoke as though to himself. "A man cannot lose what he loves as long as he loves it. The memory will stay for as long as he wants it, keeping him company, even till he dies."

The room was quiet. What a beautiful face he has, thought Angelique.

Mr. Landy shook his head, like a duck after a deep dive. "Now, just let me clear away and I will ride back with you."

Angelique rested her head on the back of the chair, listening to him move about in another room. How peaceful this house was.

He accompanied her as far as the hill above Brougham Hall where they stopped, looking down on the slate roof.

"Will you live here, Mr. Landy?"

"No, I am happy with my own home. It is where I grew up. Mrs. Brougham, about the horses..."

"Yes?"

"The chestnut is my type and gets on with my mule but Harpoon is too fine for me. A shipment of polo ponies flies to England in a few months. I have enquired and there is room for one more animal. I shall send Harpoon home to you." He put his hand out to stop her speaking. "It would make me happy to think of you riding over English fields, perhaps hunting, and I know he would take care of you."

She could only look at him.

"I will say goodbye now. The vet. comes to vaccinate my calves tomorrow morning." He reached out to her. "Be happy, Mrs. Brougham."

Angelique looked into the brown eyes that saw everything and lifted his hand, pressing it against her cheek. "Oh, Mr. Landy, I shall miss you."

He smiled but his eyes were like Hero's when his master had left him behind.

"I almost forgot." He took a package from his saddle bag. "I bought this for you." He wheeled his mule and disappeared into the forest.

Angelique rode down to the stable and as Tobe took Harpoon her heart danced knowing that next time she would saddle him herself.

In the house she opened Mr. Landy's package. It was the tea service he had served her with all these years.

There was no chance to think of anything next morning what with last minute packing and closing up the house. Angelique had one unsettling moment when she suddenly remembered her duty to the Tibbets and as though he read her thoughts Leland said, "I asked Tobe to keep an eye on World's End. He's trustworthy and Tibbets should be back in a couple of weeks."

Roosevelt was to drive them to Royaltown in the Mercedes which would travel in the same ship. The chauffeur would take a bus home to his village. They said goodbye to the servants and Angelique felt a lightening of her spirits as they passed between the gate posts for the last time. She turned to Leland

with a cheerful remark but it died on her lips when she saw the tightness in his face. She hadn't thought what giving up his estate would mean to him - she had presumed because he sold it ... All at once she knew he was giving up the army all over again, leaving the world he had made for himself. Why did he do it? She wanted to comfort him but feeling her attention he smiled. "Well," he said, "that's that." It didn't sound carefree even though he had tried.

They didn't speak again until they were in the hills and Leland pulled something from his pocket. "Forgot to tell you, a letter came from Peter this morning." His voice lost its forced joviality as he looked at the paper in his hands. "Did I let him down, Angela? The place was for him."

"Oh no, Leland! He wants to be an architect. He was afraid to tell you."

"Is that true?"

"Yes, I promise you."

He handed her the letter. "Read it aloud."

It was full of excitement about their return and then in the last paragraph - "Dad, will you teach me to shoot? I have a friend who wants to take us pheasant hunting and I told him how good you are. It would be fun eh? See you both soon, love,Peter."

It was silent in the car but for the hum of the engine then Leland said, "Did you hear that? My boy wants me to teach him to shoot, wants us to go hunting together!" Color rose in his cheeks. "Won't that be bloody grand?"

Angelique smiled at her reflection in the window. "Thank God," she thought.

It rained as they entered Royaltown, leeching color so the scene was drab and uninteresting.

They went straight on board the waiting ship, saying goodbye to Roosevelt after he had stowed their luggage in the luxurious stateroom.

"I would like to be on deck when we leave," said Angelique.

"It's raining. You can see from the window here."

"I am going out."

"Go ahead then, I will come in a few minutes."

The deck was crowded. Angelique pushed through to a place at the rail. A loud speaker asked visitors to leave and engines throbbed beneath her feet as she thought that Leland was probably already headed for the bar. Poor Leland. She would try to help him.

Men untied hawsers from the pier and flung them across intervening water, the ships whistle roared, deep

and soul wrenching, Calipso music played and colored ribbons were sent streaming toward shore. Angelique looked beyond the pier and the city to the blue mountains almost lost in cloud. Light rain misted her face as the ship pulled away and her eyes roamed along the jungle clad slopes so green and softly beautiful. Her gaze fixed on something stopped on a curve of mountain road - the same curve from which she had often looked out to sea on her way to Royaltown. All at once she knew the dot was Mr. Landy's jeep and she also knew he would watch until her ship was out of sight. "Dear Mr. Landy, I love you just as I love the island, deep and forever." The damp warm wind blew into her face bringing with it the scent of woodsmoke and flowers and she thought she heard drums. Tears blinded her.

"Don't be sad, little one."

She was startled to hear Leland's voice close to her ear and feel him against her back.

"We'll build our castle, just as we planned, the two of us."

She felt her hand taken and turned over to show the callous that was still there.

"You know, I like them best this way?" There was a smile in his voice.

Angelique forgot the island that grew ever smaller

as slowly she turned to him. "You remember!" she whispered.

He drew her close and suddenly there was nothing in the world but her husband and his murmured words, "How could I forget, my Angel, my own darling Angel."

THE END